SHOOTER

by

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Based on the Novel

Point of Impact
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. A VIETNAMESE JUNGLE - DAY

Dank, fetid, boiling.

Now a title.

Here's what it says:

1968

An Loc

TWO MARINES carrying heavy equipment are fighting their way up to the crest of a lushly foliaged hill.

THEY reach the top, crouch there, staring out.

BOB LEE SWAGGER is the hero of this piece. Around twenty, there isn't an ounce of fat. Taciturn, he has a good mind but not academically educated one -- he turned down a college scholarship to enlist in the Marines.

And he just might be the greatest long distance shooter in the world.

A good thing because right now, his job title would read thusly: marine sniper.

DONNY FENN is Bob Lee's closest friend. You can tell it's a childhood thing -- they read each other and they both have the same speech pattern and accent. Donny still has a bit of baby fat.

The kind of shooting Bob Lee does requires a partner -- the spotter is every bit as essential as the man doing the firing. Bob Lee does not have the best judgment of distance. Donny does.

WHAT THEY SEE --

-- and it's this -- on a distant hill, bunkered in, are maybe a dozen trapped US Marines. God knows how many were there in the beginning -- these few are all that are alive.

-- and surrounding them, hundreds of North Vietnamese troops, moving in on the trapped dozen on the hilltop.

Remember this -- so far we are only seeing this the way Bob Lee and Donny have -- from maybe half a mile away.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Donny puts ammunition down as Bob Lee assembles his rifle, Donny his spotter's scope.

BOB LEE
800 you think?

DONNY
(beat)
850. Hair over.

BOB LEE
Shear distortion?

DONNY
Wind's due to lull.

BOB LEE nodding, squinting out at the Vietnamese battalion and here's the thing -- they are tiny. Dots is all.

He takes a breath, looks through his scope this time --

-- still small but not dots anymore.

DONNY. Squinting through his scope at the N.V.A.

DONNY
Too many.

THE VIETNAMESE seen through Donny's scope.

BOB LEE (O.S.)
A dog can't hunt if he's got no head.
Find me some officers, Donny.

DONNY'S SCOPE continues to move slowly -- then it stops --

DONNY (O.S.)
Got a Colonel. Crater lip. 730 yards.

We see there is a UNIFORMED MAN standing by the crest of the hill.

CUT TO:

BOB LEE AND DONNY. This is it -- their ritual --

And now he holds his rifle gently, stares through his scope --

-- silent --

CONTINUED:

-- he is into his bubble.

CUT TO:

HOLD ON BOB LEE.

THE COLONEL as seen from 730 yards away without the scope.

THE COLONEL, as seen through the scope. Bigger. Now --

EXT. VIETNAMESE POSITION - DAY

THE COLONEL from just a few feet away. His body fills the screen.

HOLD ON THE COLONEL

HOLD ON THE COLONEL

KEEP HOLDING BECAUSE YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T SEE BEFORE.

IT'S JUST ABOUT TO HAPPEN...

WAIT FOR IT --

-- AND HERE IT COMES --

-- WITH NO SOUND THERE IS A HOLE IN HIS THROAT --

-- AND BLOOD LEAPS --

-- BUT THAT'S NOT THING --

-- NO, THE COLONEL'S ENTIRE BODY SEEMS TO LEAP --

-- SIDEWAYS! THAT'S RIGHT -- IT GOES SEVERAL FEET SIDEWAYS, YANKED BY SOME UNSEEN TERRIBLE POWER -- THAT'S THE IMPACT THESE BULLETS HAVE. THIS IS NOT PRETTY MOVIE BLOOD, THIS IS SCARY --

-- AND NOW THE COLONEL COLLAPSES LIKE A RAG DOLL.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

BOB LEE AND DONNY.

DONNY
(staring through his spotter's scope, as the body falls)
Hit. East quad. Major. 875 yards.

And as SWAGGER fires --

EXT. VIETNAMESE POSITION - DAY

THE MAJOR, staring at the Colonel on the ground -- he takes a step toward him --

-- then his temple has a hole in it and he leaps sideways too and collapses and --

DONNY (O.S.)
Hit. 4 to 5. Going wide. Two lieutenants. 680 yards. Three o'clock.

-- and we see them, Two Lieutenants standing close, confused, not knowing what in hell is going on, but the Colonel is down and a Major is down and as they look at each other --

-- two more holes in two more heads and blood and as they leap sideways and flop --

DONNY (O.S.)
Hit. Hit. OK. All down, all pinned.

THE BATTALION, and it's chaos for the moment and --

INT. MARINE POSITION - DAY

THE US MARINES, and they don't know what's happening either but it's a whole lot better than what was going on just a few minutes before and --

INT. VIETNAMESE POSITION - DAY

THE VIETNAMESE and their OFFICERS are checking around, trying to locate where the bullets are coming from and --

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

BOB LEE AND DONNY. Bob Lee gestures for them to get the hell out and Donny nods.

DONNY
(glancing around)
Closer?

BOB LEE
(shakes his head -- gestures away from the Vietnamese)
Other.

And on that they scramble down the hill and we --

EXT. VIETNAMESE POSITION - DAY

A DIFFERENT VIETNAMESE CAPTAIN, looking around -- his body fills the screen. Now --

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

THE CAPTAIN -- seen through Donny's SCOPE. Smaller. And now --

THE CAPTAIN -- seen with the naked eye --

-- and if the officers were dots before, and they were, now it's almost like this guy's not even there.

BOB LEE AND DONNY, on the crest of another hill, waaaay farther than before.

BOB LEE
1200?

DONNY
Long way, baby. Two foot extra drop.

CUT TO:

THE VIETNAMESE CAPTAIN we just saw -- seen through DONNY'S SCOPE.

He is conferring with half a dozen others. Then --

-- the Captain flies sideways, collapses --

DONNY (O.S.)
Hit! Outstanding, Bobby Lee.

-- now something glints --

-- metal and sun --

-- THE SCOPE moves even farther away --

-- we are looking at an enemy sniper --

-- 1800 yards away --

DONNY (O.S.)
(urgent)
-- enemy sniper -- enemy sniper at 1800 --

CUT TO:

BOB LEE -- moving his scope farther away and then --

CONTINUED:

DONNY, gathering up fast.

DONNY
Outta here --

BOB LEE
-- he can't make that shot -- hell I can't make that shot --
(looking at Donny)
-- find me an officer goddamnit --

CUT TO:

THE SNIPER. As seen from where they are. So far away. He almost seems not to exist.

CUT TO:

BOB LEE AND DONNY.

DONNY
This is bad.

BOB LEE
-- Donny, it's gonna be okay --

DONNY
(gesturing)
-- what if he's not alone? -- what if there's ten of him? --

BOB LEE
-- I'll find my own officer --

And as he presses his scope close, goes into his bubble.

EXT. VIETNAMESE POSITION - DAY

A VIETNAMESE LIEUTENANT. Flying sideways, collapsing.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

DONNY, uncertain, urges Bob Lee.

DONNY
Outta here. Now!

And now something awful happens --

-- BOB LEE'S whole body flips sideways --

-- his hip is shattered --

-- pain takes his mind --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- and he screams --

DONNY, shocked, rocked, starts back for Bob Lee --

BOB LEE, desperately fighting back to consciousness --

BOB LEE
Get out -- you get out --

DONNY, picking up Bob Lee who is in agony and you can almost hear his hip bones move and the blood is spurting but Donny doesn't give a shit, screams right back at him --

DONNY
(yelling all he has)
Oh does it hurt, you pussy, does it just smart something awful? -- well tough shit, whine all you want --

DONNY'S EYE is shot away and he flies sideways one way, Bob Lee goes the other, and Bob Lee lands alive but not Donny.

BOB LEE, sobbing out of control as he reaches Donny, cradles his head, rocks him, rocks him, Donny's blood mixing with his tears.

HOLD ON THE TWO OF THEM.

WE HEAR AMERICAN WARPLANES fly over, starting to bomb the VIETNAMESE.

BOB LEE can't stop crying...

As the warplanes continue to bomb away --

DISSOLVE TO:

ANOTHER PLANE -- a modern one, a giant passenger jetliner, starting it's descent toward a large, modern airport.

Then this --

A TITLE.

Here's what it says:

1998

New Orleans

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. THE PALM COURT MOTEL - DAY

Third rate all the way, but it's close to the New Orleans airport and manages to stay alive.

CUT TO:

NICK MEMPHIS getting out of his car in front of the place.

Pay attention -- this is our other guy.

Nick's just past thirty, with the local FBI, specializing in drugs. Bright eyed, bushy-tailed, with a mouth and an attitude. But he's tough enough to get out of trouble. Most of time, anyway.

A BUNCH OF NEW COKE MACHINES as Nick stops nearby at room 58, knocks.

MEMPHIS
(calling out)
Mr. Bedoya... It's Nick Memphis.

No answer. He KNOCKS again. LOUDER.

HOUSEKEEPER
Nobody home.

MEMPHIS
You have a key?

HOUSEKEEPER
You a cop?

MEMPHIS
FBI.

HOUSEKEEPER
Same thing. Ask him.

She points to...

CUT TO:

THE MANAGER. A geezer.

MEMPHIS
(flashing his ID -- very polite)
Sorry to bother you, sir, but I'd like to see the man in room 58.

MANAGER
(suspicious)
Got a warrant?

CONTINUED:

NICK. A sigh.

MEMPHIS
When I joined the Bureau, everybody wanted to bust their asses for us. 'Oh yessir, can I help you, sir?' Now everybody behaves like we're Jack the Ripper. I think it's the TV shows.

The Manager just stares at Memphis.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Look, he called my office urgently no more'n an hour ago, left his room number, said he'd just checked in. He said he wouldn't move 'til I got here.

MANAGER
(indicating the door)
That guy, he can rot all I care.

MEMPHIS
How can you hate him so fast?

MANAGER
Asshole had to have the room by the fuggin' Coke machine. Insisted. Even paid me to move someone out. Can you believe that? What a prick.

MEMPHIS
You major in Elizabethan Literature?
(no reaction)
Please open the door my good fellow or I will rain down upon you from the sky.

CUT TO:

THE MANAGER, unlocking the door. He pushes it open. Nick calls in.

MEMPHIS
Mr. Bedoya? My name is Nick Memphis -- you wanted to see me.

No answer. Nick goes in.

INT. A SHABBY MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Packets of cocaine all over.

And blood. On the walls, on the bed, the mirror, even the ceiling.

Nick draws a weapon. The manager backs off, horrified.

CONTINUED:

Nick follows the blood trail into the bathroom --

THE BATHROOM.

It's worse. THE VICTIM has been sliced apart.

MEMPHIS
(to manager)
Call for help. Now!

NICK. Kneels by the corpse, half turns him over.

Dozen of packets of cocaine in his pockets.

MEMPHIS
(whispered -- we don't see the dead guy yet)
Who were you?

And on that --

THE DEAD MAN. His face has been chopped away.

NICK, trying his best to keep control.

MEMPHIS
(whispered)
Oh boy...

HOLD ON MEMPHIS a moment, then --

CUT TO:

A BREATHTAKING SHOT --

-- OUT OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS--

-- AT DAWN

-- A TITLE READS:

APPALACHIA

<u>The Day Before</u>

CUT TO:

EXT.STREAM - DAWN

A more beautiful and tranquil scene you could not find. Insects buzz across the surface of a a pool.

A fish jumps. Ripples...then nothing...

-- BUT SOMETHING IS MOVING --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- A 12 POINT STAG steps out of the woods. Cautiously. He sniffs the breeze, nostrils quiver, every sense alert... satisfied, he begins to drink...but, warily.

-- And now we are watching him through the crosshairs of a rifle scope --

-- A FINGER tightens on a trigger.

-- the STAG looks up, eyes wide.

-- the same breathtaking wide shot of the mountains --

Only now a GUNSHOT is heard, it's ECHO ROLLING across the valley.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

A CAMOUFLAGE HAT RISES UP. The face of A HUNTER appears. He lowers his rifle. ANOTHER HUNTER appears next to him. They both look astonished.

HUNTER 1
Got 'em! C'mon!

EXT STREAM - DAWN

The same place we saw the deer drinking. Only now, he's gone. The two hunters arrive NOISILY, PANTING with the thrill of the kill, except the stag is nowhere to be seen.

-- But there is blood in the water --

HUNTER 1
Jesus Christ! Where is he?

HUNTER 2
Maybe you missed.

Words cannot describe the look the other man gives him.

HUNTER 1
He's here. You saw him drop.

The two men begin a frantic and clumsy search of the area. To no avail. The shooter stops by a thick tangle of bushes, BREATHING HEAVILY.

-- we are looking down past his boots --

-- at the terrified face of the wounded stag --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now the boots move away to reveal the face of a man --

BOB LEE SWAGGER. At 50. He lies across the neck of the stag pinning him. His weathered face is inches from the stag's wide eyes. One hand holds the stag's head down, firmly. The other is doing a curious thing, It is pinching a nerve. Immobilizing the animal.

Swagger is still. Like stone. WE HEAR the FRUSTRATED SOUNDS of the two hunters moving away, CURSING. Swagger waits... and waits. This is what he's good at.

SILENCE. The two hunters have moved on.

Only now does Swagger relax. He MURMURS something soothing in the animal's ear, then releases the pinched nerve. The stag begins to thrash about, but weakly. Swagger restrains him, then examines the wound tenderly. As he does, we see the face of a profoundly changed man. Rugged, tanned, and alert, but more peaceful now.

-- But his eyes tell another story --

CUT TO:

EXT. A STUNNING WATERFALL - DAY

Swagger appears carrying the wounded stag over his shoulders. As he moves, WE NOW SEE A CABIN built over the river atop a giant rock.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Swagger's watchdog, runs to meet him. MIKE has several things going against him considering his occupation: he is not big, being if mostly anything, mostly beagle. He is also old and likes people. But he barks well enough and he has a ferocious growl.

BOB LEE
(approaching)
Any messages?

Mike shakes his head. We could be looking at a genius dog here.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
Good. Visitors?

Mike nods, follows Swagger toward the cabin.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN/PORCH - DAY

Swagger lowers the stag onto the porch. He is drenched in sweat. He straightens up.

BOB LEE
Sam?

The door opens and SAM VINCENT emerges. Sam is in late sixties, sinewy and tough. He shakes his head in amazement.

SAM
How did you know I was here?

BOB LEE
Mike told me.

SAM
But how did you know it was me?

BOB LEE
Mike would have torn the leg off anyone else. I need some water.

Sam goes to the river with a container. Swagger moves fast now. He swiftly moves inside then comes out with a medical kit and a satchel.

Sam returns with the water and watches as Swagger expertly cleans the wound and begins dressing it.

-- But with some strange stuff --

-- A mixture of leafy paste and bush medicine --

SAM
You can't save them all you know.

BOB LEE
This one I can. Shot went clean through.

Swagger finishes with the stag and leaves him on the porch. He goes to the river and wades in, throwing water over himself and washing the blood off. He walks out of the water and sits next to Sam. Mike hovers nearby as the two men look over at the stag.

BOB LEE
What's up, Sam?

SAM
Some government people are looking for you. They knew I was your friend, as well as your lawyer. I checked out their I.D.'s. Intelligence.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)
(looks at Swagger)
You might want to meet them.

SWAGGER. He considers this.

BOB LEE
You're the best friend I got left, you know what your opinion means to me.

SAM
(touched)
Thank you, sir.

BOB LEE
Unfortunately, Mike's means more.
(to the dog now)
Mike should I go see these people?

Mike shakes his head. Bob Lee sighs, looks at Sam.

BOB LEE
There's your answer. Tell them no. Mike's never wrong.
(turning toward the cabin)
Stay for lunch if you like.

And on that --

SAM. Exploding.

SAM
I will not accept that pooch as a final arbiter. Because you trained him and you know Mike always shakes his head on the first question, always nods the second time 'round.
(to the dog now)
Mike, would you like me to bring you the most beautiful girl beagle in the world who is also in heat?

Mike shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)
And would you like me to castrate you here and now with something blunt?

Mike nods.

BOB LEE, looking at his friend now.

SAM
I rest my case.

And on that --

CONTINUED: (2)

-- Suddenly the stag scrambles to his feet and wobbles uncertainly. Sam watches in amazement. The stag looks around, sees the two men and the dog, then sprints for the woods.

Sam turns to Swagger as if to say something. But words fail him. Bobby Lee is deep in thought.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERTED RAILROAD TRACKS - DUSK

On the edge of a small town in Appalachia. Woods in the background.

Sun is considering going down.

THREE PEOPLE stand around nervously.

The leader of the three, PULLMAN. 40's, and very smart.

BEN DOBBLER is an intelligence analyst. Same age, he works out with weights a lot but still seems pretty much a wuss.

The third is a woman.

MEG BRANSFORD is originally from the south, and occasionally, when excited, the old accent comes through. She is 35, very winning, very pretty. Smarter than Pullman. She gets what she wants. Most of the time.

They pace around, glance at each other, nervously pace some more.

Behind them, Swagger watches.

He is at a distance, stays that way. One of his greatest gifts is that of stillness and now, on his haunches, studying them you get the feeling this could go on forever.

Pullman glances at his watch, mutters. Dobbler coughs. Meg walks a few steps, turns --

-- and very surprised, says "Shit".

They look at her, she nods, they follow it, see Swagger. Now they look at each other a moment, not sure what to do.

SWAGGER. Watching them. Still. As before.

THE THREE OF THEM. They start toward him.

SWAGGER. An imperceptible shake of his head.

THE THREE OF THEM. They stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SWAGGER from where they stand. Not only is he an unsettling distance away, with the sun behind him, hard to see. Eerie.

PULLMAN
Gunnery Sergeant Swagger?

BOB LEE
(soft)
Assume that.

PULLMAN
(flustered)
Right, right.
(hand over his eyes)
It's really hard to see you.

BOB LEE
(soft)
Assume I know that.

PULLMAN
(more flustered)
Right, right.
(indicates the others)
This is Ben Dobbler, intelligence analyst. And Meg -- should have mentioned you first, sorry, anyway, Meg Bransford's with National Security Council.
(tries for a smile)
I'm Tom Pullman, Deputy Director, Secret Service.
(looking around)
Can we talk someplace private?

WHERE THEY ARE. Nothing living except the four of them.

BOB LEE
All these enemy agents disguised as trees got you worried?

THE THREE. They look at each other, and for a moment you can almost read their faces: what are we dealing with here?

PULLMAN
(to Meg)
You try.

MEG. She takes a half step toward Swagger. Then --

MEG
Our Intelligence reports tell us there's going to be an assassination attempt on the President.

SWAGGER. He considers this. Then --

CONTINUED: (2)

BOB LEE
So naturally you came to me.

MEG AND SWAGGER.

MEG
No -- we considered half a dozen others before we came to you.

BOB LEE
I don't kill anymore.

MEG
We know that. We don't want you to kill.
(beat)
But we need you to help us catch the killer.
(beat)
The attempt will come in two weeks. In either Chicago or New Orleans. Two large political events are planned. Both out of doors.

BOB LEE
Why don't you get him yourself?

MEG. A beat.

MEG
We have evidence that he's going to be shot from a distance well beyond our safety zone. Perhaps up to a mile away. We can't possibly cover all the options. Someone has to assess where the shot will come from. Now do you see?
(looks at him)
That's your world.

BOB LEE
Was.

PULLMAN
(trying to keep control)
We're not asking that much -- a few days of your time --
(from Bob Lee -- silence)
-- this is the President we're talking about.

SWAGGER, and now he does a surprising thing: stands, turns, goes.

PULLMAN, shocked, calling out.

PULLMAN
Please, we need your help!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

And on that --

SWAGGER. He just keeps on going.

MEG. Losing it.

MEG
Assume I think you're an asshole.

SWAGGER. He glances back at them.

BOB LEE
Won't be Chicago. Sniper can't hit shit in Chicago. Mean winds.
(beat)
There. I helped you.

And the woods have him --

MEG, PULLMAN AND DOBBLER, staring after him, then at each other. Failed and miserable...

EXT. CABIN - DUSK

BOB LEE is chopping wood. Mike is snoozing. Suddenly Swagger stops. He listens. Mike awakes and is suddenly alert. They both look at each other.

Now, in the distance, comes the sound of a voice calling his name, "SWAGGER."

EXT. WATERFALL - DUSK

Meg, standing at the base of the waterfall, rocks rising above. She is dressed in smart off-the-shelf outdoors clothing.

Sundown. Couldn't be lovelier.

Meg doesn't see it that way. She's frustrated and edgy. Calls out Swagger's name again --

-- then gasps --

-- Swagger is at the top of the rocks, watching her.

MEG
(pissed)
You like appearing out of nowhere, don't you? What were you, a vampire in an earlier life?

BOB LEE
Just an asshole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG
(apologetic)
I'm really sorry I said that.

BOB LEE
(soft, but he means this)
There is a liar here.

MEG. Taken aback. No question, Swagger is scary.

MEG
I loved saying it.

Bob Lee nods.

MEG (CONT'D)
I'm here to see you --
(interrupting herself)
-- sorry, I assume you figured that.
(pointing to the rocks)
There an easy way up?

He shakes his head 'no'.

MEG (CONT'D)
Can you help me then?

SWAGGER, looking down at her.

-- then he turns and walks off, leaving her alone.

MEG. Cannot believe it. She just stands there. Then --

EXT. CABIN - DUSK

Swagger's finishing splitting wood. Mike growls at sounds from nearby.

MEG. And she's made it up. But her face is smudged, her jacket a little ripped, her trousers a little torn.

MEG
Couldn't have done it without you.

She looks at Swagger, tries a smile. He does not return it.

BOB LEE
(low)
What do you want?

MEG
(edgy)
I said already -- to see you.

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
There is a liar here.

He picks up an armful of wood and heads for the cabin, Mike wagging alongside. Meg hesitates, stands there -- because she isn't edgy now, she's scared.

But this is a gutty girl. She sucks it up, goes after him.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - DUSK

Swagger and Mike already inside.

Meg gets to the front door, looks at him, and you can see it on her face: 'Is it all right to come in?'

Nothing from Swagger.

MEG
I take it that's a yes.

And in she goes --

She glances around. From a woman's point of view it is even more sparse than when we saw it before. She sees Swagger's rifle on a rack next to her. She looks at it. Almost involuntarily she moves to touch it.

BOB LEE
Nobody touches that rifle but me.

Meg pulls back her hand. She looks directly at Swagger.

MEG
I really do want to see you.

BOB LEE
No you don't. You want to talk to me.

MEG
Okay, you're right, I want to talk to you.

BOB LEE
No, you don't want to do that either. You don't want just to talk to me, you want to change me. You want to convince me. You want to convince me to do what you want. You want me to leave my home, where I choose to be, and go out there. Well, I have seen what's out there.
(beat)
Why do you think I'm here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG
I know what happened at An Loc. I know how Donny Fenn died... I know how it changed you.

BEAT.

BOB LEE
You know nothing.

Meg says nothing. They both stare at each other.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
Have you ever killed anyone?

MEG
No.

BOB LEE
But they taught you to?

MEG
Yes.

BOB LEE
They taught me too. I killed a lot. I was good at it. I killed every man I shot at. And know this. I liked it... I liked it too much. And <u>that's</u> why Donny died, and <u>that's</u> why I'm here.

Swagger walks to the door and holds it open for her. Meg holds her ground. She moves to the table and dumps her backpack onto it.

MEG
There <u>is</u> a liar here -- and it's <u>you</u>, Swagger. 'Oh oh oh, horrible me, I killed my best friend, I must atone, I must hide forever' -- well <u>bullshit</u> to that. Fucking total bullshit <u>and we both know it</u> and we both know this: <u>people do not behave that way</u>. Sure it's sad he died but it was no more your fault than it was mine -- another shooter made a great shot.

SWAGGER, staring at her. You get the impression he could snap her neck in two any minute.

MEG (CONT'D)
Vietnam was the highlight of your life, but be careful what you wish for you might get it, and what you had was the greatest rush in the world and it's fabulous, sure, but it's scary -- you have this terrible gift for killing

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEG (CONT'D)
and why you're here is it scared the shit out of you, because what happens when it takes control of you next time, how many die then?

Meg opens the backpack and removes a folder and puts it on Swagger's table.

MEG (CONT'D)
Yes, I came to change you. Yes, I came to convince you. I want to save a man's life --
-- and I need your help.

As Swagger watches, Meg opens the folder and looks at him. Swagger lets the door go and slowly moves closer to her.

MEG (CONT'D)
At least help me with this. I need to know if it's possible.

Swagger looks down to see a series of grainy overhead photographs with National Security Aerial Reconnaissance marked on them. He sees a bizarre series of flimsy towers with vehicles nearby. A series of lines intersect each tower with measurements along each line.

MEG
This was taken over the desert outside Baghdad.

BOB LEE
They're prepping a shot.

Bob Lee traces his finger along a line that reads 1800 yards.

MEG
What I need to know is, can anyone make this shot?

BOB LEE
Yes.

MEG
But it's over a mile!

Swagger looks at her, Their eyes lock.

Just as suddenly he turns and goes to the wall next to the door. As Meg watches he removes his rifle, grabs a box of cartridges and a strange looking telescope. He hands the scope to Meg and walks outside. Bewildered, Meg looks at the scope, then follows Bob Lee outside.

EXT. CABIN - DUSK

Bob Lee walks to a strange looking bench. He kneels and loads his rifle then turns to Meg.

BOB LEE
Watch the bucket.

MEG
Where?

Swagger ignores her and turns away. He adopts a shooter's stance at the strange looking bench. Meg sees that he is aiming at the other side of the valley, an impossible distance. She sights the scope. Inside she sees a graduated mathematical scale. A rangefinder. On the other side of the valley she sees an old abandoned mineshaft. Scattered near the entrance are various old rusty pieces of junk. Finally, she sees an old plastic bucket amongst them.

The rangefinder is reading 1840 yards. Meg looks away from the scope to Swagger.

Bob Lee has become like stone. He almost appears not to be breathing. She looks back at the bucket. A shot rings out reverberating off the rock walls. Meg watches the bucket. Nothing happens. Still she watches. The echo of the shot dies away. Still nothing. He must have missed! Then in absolute silence she sees a violent spray of water as the bucket disappears. Then we hear the delayed IMPACT RING OUT across the valley.

MEG (CONT'D)
Mother of god!

Bob Lee stands and looks out over the valley. He does not look at Meg who is dumbstruck.

BOB LEE
A mile isn't so far.

Mike YELPS as Swagger ejects the spent cartridge and puts it in his pocket. He turns to Meg who is just staring at him. He holds his hand out to her. She looks puzzled, then realizes. She hands him the spotting scope. Their eyes meet.

BOB LEE
Mike, should I tell this woman to get lost?

Meg looks down. Mike shakes his head. Meg looks up at Swagger in amazement. Bob Lee smiles as we hear the ROAR and WHINE of a jet aircraft landing at...

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS AIRPORT - EARLY EVENING

The giant belly of a DELTA jet SCREECHES onto the stacked runway of New Orleans Airport.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DUSK

Traffic roars past on the I-10 as Meg drives Swagger into New Orleans in a sleek Lincoln Navigator. Another driver cuts in front of her. Bob Lee jumps involuntarily, but Meg expertly controls the situation.

MEG
You're not used to this, are you?

BOB LEE
I'll survive.

Meg hands Swagger a folder.

MEG
Everything you need to know is in there. Time, place, levels of security.

Bob Lee opens the folder and reads the first page.

BOB LEE
What's O.A.S.?

MEG
Organization of American States Conference. Every South American head of State will be here -- with their own security. We can protect him in close -- -- out there is our problem.

Swagger looks out the window. They are coming off the downtown interchange past the Superdome. The city looks huge. Skyscrapers ablaze with light pass by.

BOB LEE
Who's the shooter?

MEG
(beat)
We don't know. The recon photos suggest he's international but... could be anyone.

BOB LEE
Not just anyone. How long have I got?

MEG
Three days.

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
I'll start at first light.

MEG
Need any help?

BOB LEE
No.

MEG
(looks at him)
I'd like to.

BOB LEE
I work better alone.

Meg pulls into the front of a large hotel. Swagger grabs his rucksack and the folder.

MEG
Dinner. Tomorrow... on me, OK?

She smiles at Swagger. It's one of <u>those</u> smiles. Swagger's composure crumbles. As their eyes meet, there is one of those moments -- fleeting, but it's there -- Swagger smiles ever so slightly, nods, and then she's gone. He watches her go as we --

CUT TO:

INT. SWAGGER'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

SWAGGER in his hotel room. Modern. High up. He stares out at the darkening city.

Silent.

Now he goes back to the desk which is <u>covered</u> with charts -- humidity tables, trajectory charts --

-- suddenly a sharp sound <u>startles</u> him -- he stands quickly, ready for anything.

The sound is <u>louder</u>.

Swagger starts to laugh --

-- it's the <u>fax machine</u> as a letter is being transmitted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Swagger takes the letter out, reads it:

THIS IS A FAX MACHINE, SWAGGER -- WELCOME TO THE 20TH CENTURY. SEE YOU TOMORROW.

MEG

And now we hear the SOUND OF GUNFIRE as we --

CUT TO:

INT. FBI FIRING RANGE - DAY

Bullet holes puncture the familiar outline of the 'bad guy' target. SIX SHOTS, RAPID. Three in the head...one miss...one neck...one miss...one shoulder. NICK MEMPHIS is on the firing line. He stops to reload. Grins at his partner NAN MORALES, 30, attractive, tough, no nonsense. Morales is a poster child for FBI recruitment. Morales adopts the bureau firing stance and fires.

-- SIX SHOTS, RAPID. Five in the head, one in the heart...

She stops, smiles at Memphis and leaves. They both check their guns at the desk in the lobby. Memphis heads for the Coke machine.

MEMPHIS
I wish you wouldn't do that to me.

MORALES
Get rid of the Glock, Memphis. Smith and Wesson is still the king.

Memphis brings back two cans of Coke. They both walk out of the lobby.

MEMPHIS
Hey Morales. Why would a guy pay someone to move out of a room so he could be next to the Coke machine?

MORALES
Maybe he doesn't like Pepsi.

HAP FENCL appears between them. Hap is their boss, 50's bureau.

HAP
My office. Ten minutes.

CUT TO:

INT. HAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Memphis and Morales enter and sit opposite Hap.

HAP
So?

MEMPHIS
Bedoya wasn't his real name. And this wasn't about drugs. I never saw a rip-off go down where the coke was left behind.

MORALES
They chopped him up with an axe and took his fingers off. But we're checking DNA and dental.

MEMPHIS
Cabdriver picked him up an hour before. We're checking flight manifests. Someone doesn't want us to know who he is. I can't figure why he asked for me then let someone else in the room. No sign of forced entry.

Hap looks at both of them. Then pushes over a stack of paper towards them.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
What's this?

HAP
Nut lists.

MEMPHIS
What?

HAP
The President of the United States is coming here and the Bureau is running extra security. You two get a bonus. You get to vet the nut list...death threats, crank letters, hate mail. Find the local nut case, lock him up 'til the President has gone.

MEMPHIS
What about Bedoya?

HAP
He'll keep. Pick it up when this is over.

CONTINUED:

A STEAM BLAST OF NOISE from --

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER WALK - DAY

The paddle steamer "NATCHEZ" surges past the tourists thronging the river's edge. BOB LEE SWAGGER stands among the others on a raised dais with a civil war cannon. ARTILLERY PARK overlooks JACKSON SQUARE and the St. Louis Cathedral. It is from here the President will address the people.

Swagger looks for all the world like every other tourist taking photos...except...

-- Swagger does not have a camera --

-- He has a prasmatic optical rangefinder --

-- What it does is: TELL YOU DISTANCE.

-- WE NOW SEE WHAT SWAGGER SEES...

-- Top floor, WORLD TRADE CENTER -- 780 yards --

WHIP PAN TO:

-- ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL -- 356 yards --

WHIP PAN TO:

-- DESERTED BUILDING IN ALGIERS, on other side of River --

-- 930 yards

WHIP PAN TO:

-- FOUR HUNDRED WINDOWS OF THE HOLIDAY INN -- 880 yards --

WHIP PAN TO:

-- CLOCK TOWER, INDUSTRIAL AREA -- 1800 YARDS.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

Swagger attaches crepe paper to a television antenna.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP WORLD TRADE CENTER - DAY

Swagger walks past a giant air conditioning unit. Attaches crepe paper to surveillance camera.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD BUILDING ALGIERS - DAY

Swagger attaches crepe paper to chain link fence. He looks at the sun. He looks at his watch...11:30.

What he's doing. Figuring it out --

Figuring it out.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

Swagger attaches crepe paper to fence surrounding Jackson Square.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Memphis and Morales are sifting through the nut list. Memphis picks one up and shakes his head.

MEMPHIS
Listen to this. '...Medal of Honor is rightfully mine, as I earned it fighting an unjust war in a foreign land. Remember, if history has taught us anything, it is that anyone can be killed anywhere. Anytime. Including you.'

MORALES
Local?

MEMPHIS
West Virginia.

He puts it aside as HAP FENCL comes in with THREE OTHER MEN in suits.

HAP
Agents Memphis and Morales, Howard D. Utey, Secret Service.

CONTINUED:

HOWARD D. UTEY, 46, nods to Memphis and Morales. Oliver North in a suit. He sizes up the nut list on the desk.

UTEY
Any luck with the 'active suspect' list?

MEMPHIS
You mean the nut list?

Utey takes an immediate dislike to Memphis.

UTEY
(cold)
Agent Memphis. Let's not make this any more difficult than it is. The Service appreciates the help from the FBI, but sarcasm doesn't really help us all get along, does it?

You could cut the air with a knife. Utey and the others leave. HAP remains.

HAP
Congratulations, Nick. Great P.R.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Plates of crawfish and bowls of gumbo whirl through the waiting crowd at a popular neighborhood eatery.

SWAGGER AND MEG sit in a corner. Meg looks gorgeous...an observation not lost on Swagger, who looks a little uncomfortable.

Meg is expertly tailing crawfish and wolfing them down. Swagger is having trouble removing the tail. Meg reaches over to assist him. She cracks open the tail and leans forward to place it in Swagger's mouth.

MEG
There...like that. A heart attack on a plate. God I love this food!

Swagger manages a weak smile and attempts another crawfish. MEG LAUGHS. She is enjoying this.

MEG (CONT'D)
Lighten up, Swagger. It's the nineties. Women take men out to dinner now.

BOB LEE
I hear they fly bombers as well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG
(laughs)
Yup. It's a great time to work for Uncle Sam. Equal Opportunity Employer...
...try the grits.

BOB LEE
(awkward)
...so how do you...? I mean...

MEG
How did I get to be here defending my country instead of sitting at home doing the ironing? -- contacts. My father was a Marine Colonel. I was an army brat... learned to shoot and cuss before I left grade school. I was in Quantico before I was twenty. I've never looked back...there. That's me. I'm an open book... OK your turn...

She smiles. Another drop dead gorgeous smile --

Swagger is clearly not used to this fraternization.

BOB LEE
You already know. It's in the file.

MEG
I don't mean that. Tell me about the good stuff. Girlfriends? Wife? Mistress?

-- JESUS! She's pushy. Swagger blushes, but holds his ground.

BOB LEE
I was a marine.

-- And that says it all. Meg is caught off guard for a moment. THEN SHE LAUGHS. Swagger smiles then LAUGHS as well.

MEG
Swagger, you're priceless.
(beat)
So -- How's it going?

BOB LEE
I'll be done tomorrow.

MEG
Great. I'll set up a debrief in the evening,

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Quarter is alive and jumping as MEG and SWAGGER emerge. MUSIC fills the air as revellers and tourists swirl past them --

-- Swagger looks at Meg, who looks at him --

-- It's that moment after a date. Who will make the first move?

BOB LEE
Thanks...I...

They are close -- just looking at each other...you know...<u>that</u> kind of look --

MEG
My pleasure. Government's paying anyway --
-- Good night, Bobby Lee --

And she's gone -- Swagger watches her go.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

-- Crepe paper flutters in the breeze as we watch through the rangefinder. Suddenly, we WHIP PAN TO ANOTHER --

-- THEN ANOTHER --

-- AND ANOTHER --

All the pieces we saw Swagger attaching the previous day.

-- NOW WE SEE SWAGGER. He is inside the CLOCK TOWER we saw previously. The old mechanism CLANKS and WHIRS behind him as he sights through a small window at the dais beyond --

-- he makes notations then looks around as we --

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - AN AUDITORIUM - DAY

HOWARD UTEY has center stage. Secret Service agents are seated with the FBI and local Police Commanders --

-- A <u>LOT</u> OF PEOPLE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS stands at the rear with HAP, as Utey uses a laser pointer to cover a series of projected overhead images of the Presidential site.

UTEY
... each Latin and Central American leader will have their own security arrangements, but not one of them gets near Flashlight is that understood? We are responsible for Presidential security and I only trust the people in this room...

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY

Swagger is inside an old warehouse. He looks through the rangefinder towards the dais from a broken window then moves to another part of the room. From this window he can see the clock tower. He sights the rangefinder, makes notes, then sits against a wall --

-- and thinks... figuring it out.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS MEMPHIS' OFFICE - DAY

MEMPHIS comes into his office. Morales is downloading information. Memphis is pissed.

MEMPHIS
That prick Howdy Doody split us up. You're with Vanatter on Decatur Street. I'm in the Wharf District on my own.
-- I hate that jargon they use --
-- 'Flashlight is on the move.'
'Tinkerbell is airborne.'

MORALES
I found out who Bedoya really was.

She hands Memphis the printouts and photos. Memphis scans them rapidly as Morales gets up.

MORALES (CONT'D)
We got him on a DNA match. Eduardo Lanzman. Thirty-six... Ecuadorean. Military Intelligence.

MEMPHIS
(at photo)
Jesus.., I knew this guy!

MORALES
You what?

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS
DEA conference two years ago. He was Regional Narcotics then. Now he's Military Intelligence? -- the guy's a spook -- what's going on here?

CUT TO:

INT. MEG'S CAR - NIGHT

Swagger and Meg in her Navigator -- she is driving slowly through a residential area.

MEG
(pointing to a house up ahead)
Owners are in Europe -- they think they're subleasing to a music professor -- we really caught a break.

As she slows, starts to park --

INT. LARGE HOUSE GARDEN DISTRICT - NIGHT

SWAGGER follows Meg into a large formal room. PULLMAN and DOBBLER greet him. ANOTHER MAN rises from a chair.

PULLMAN
Bob Lee Swagger...Lawrence Payne.

Payne firmly shakes Swagger's hand.

PAYNE
An honor to meet you sir.

Payne steps back. Swagger sizes up the room.

BOB LEE
The shooter will fire on the President from a distance of 1800 yards. Because of that, he'll use a shooter's bench. The rifle will be a .300 H and H Magnum with a .750 grain copper-sheathed .50 caliber hand turned round, which will hit the target at over 1500 feet per second. It will penetrate any body armor the President is wearing.

THE OTHERS. Taut. Astonished. Shocked.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
He'll be up three to five stories. Any higher and the bullet trajectory becomes irrational. He will also use some kind of non-ballistic noise suppression system. He doesn't want to be heard because he

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
wants to get away. He's interested in the safest escape route.

MEG
Do you know when?

BOB LEE
I do. The shooter will fire at noon when the shadows are less severe.

PULLMAN
Do you know where?

BOB LEE
He'll shoot from the clock tower on the corner of North Rampart and Desire. It's the Warehouse District and affords the best escape.

THE FOUR OF THEM. Wow.

PULLMAN
Christ almighty... thank you Sergeant Swagger.

MEG
Anything else?

BOB LEE
Yes. I want to know why I'm still being lied to. I want to know why another Marine is in this room with NSA personnel and I want to know who the shooter is because you people do.

ALL FOUR. You can cut the tension.

PULLMAN looks to DOBBLER, is about to speak when MEG stands up. Swagger looks at her.

MEG
We believe the assassination is being orchestrated from somewhere inside the Government. That is why only five people in this room know about it...
...Marine Master Sergeant Payne is a sniper like yourself and we need him to kill the shooter...
...and the shooter is a Special Forces trained Russian named Solaratov...
...and he's the man that shot you and Donny Fenn in Vietnam thirty years ago.

SWAGGER. STUNNED. FURIOUS. SPEECHLESS.

CONTINUED: (2)

MEG
We knew you didn't kill anymore. We also couldn't take the risk you would act out of vengeance. Sergeant Payne is the best we could find...besides you.
-- I'm sorry. We had no choice.

SWAGGER. Taking it in --

For the longest time nobody speaks... THEN --

BOB LEE
I was shot by a Russian?

MEG
We've been tracking him since the end of the Cold War. He's hired himself out for some of the most sensational hits of the last ten years. Thirty years ago he was in the An Loc Valley deliberately. You were a legend Swagger. They wanted you dead. He came after you.

PAYNE
I'm sorry, sir. I didn't want it to be like this. You were my hero.

Swagger looks over to Payne --

-- then Dobbler...Pullman --

-- and finally Meg.

BOB LEE
Why shoot him? Why not just move in and get him?

DOBBLER
Detroit '73. Some nut was going to take out Nixon. We found out where he was, moved in. He'd vanished. Luckily, Nixon resigned before the guy got him.

MEG
We also can't risk alerting whoever planned this. We've got to stop them now.

Swagger moves to the window. His mind is racing --

-- then calm.

-- figuring it out.

-- finally --

CONTINUED: (3)

BOB LEE
Sergeant. Can you hit a one foot diameter target, through glass, from 630 yards?

PAYNE
I think so sir.

-- THE LONGEST PAUSE --

Finally Swagger turns.

BOB LEE
I'll do it.

MEG
What?

BOB LEE
Someone has to know they can make that shot.
-- I can --
(beat)
-- it's what you wanted...isn't it?

MEG
Yes, but not like this...
...are you okay?

BOB LEE
I'm fine.

CUT TO:

INT. SWAGGER'S HOTEL ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Swagger, paces, goes to the window, stares out, turns, paces some more, keeps on. His eyes are bright. And sleep is just not possible.

EXT. THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS - DAY

As seen from on high. Morning. Of a gorgeous day.

EXT. THE MISSISSIPPI - DAY

As seen from on high. A squadron of MILITARY HELICOPTERS flies into view. They could be deadly spiders.

EXT. ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

The dais.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hundreds of chairs are being unfolded.

The speaker's rostrum is in place -- the Presidential seal affixed.

DOZENS of SECRET SERVICE MEN move efficiently around.

One of them speaks into a radio, staring up at a neighboring building.

EXT. THE ROOFTOP OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER - DAY

ANOTHER SECRET SERVICE MAN, answering via radio.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL -- It's nearby and it is the Secret Service Communications Center --

-- and this is a very fucking big deal folks.

EXT. THE BORDERS OF JACKSON SQUARE - DAY

Countersniper post.

Two guys are already there, one with rifle, the other with binoculars.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

There are HALF A DOZEN of these posts -- spotted around the area.

EXT. THE DAIS AT ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

THE VIEW FROM WHERE THE PRESIDENT WILL SPEAK. All roped off. No one there at the moment. Still early.

INT. SWAGGER'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Swagger, showered, coming out of the bathroom, wearing a terrycloth robe. He goes to the window, stares out.

Body tense.

Wonderfully taut and muscular --

-- but the scars are visible still --

-- and truly, they must have been awful.

INT. MEMPHIS' APARTMENT - DAY

CONTINUED:

Memphis in his small apartment. One bedroom, a bachelor's dump.

Dressed, he pours himself some fresh brewed coffee, sips it --

-- correction -- tries to sip it -- it's burnt -- awful --

He makes a face, pitches the stuff, heads on out.

EXT. LOUIS ARMSTRONG PARK - DAY

The dais. More bunting strung, the chairs in perfect alignment.

EXT. SWAGGER'S HOTEL - DAY

Swagger, standing in front of his hotel as Meg pulls up, toots the horn. He gets in, they drive off.

EXT. THE SKY OVER THE CITY - DAY

More and more helicopters circle.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A couple of dozen street vendors -- gearing up -- the big items seem to be T-shirts and flags with President Crawford smiling.

Also a few South American trinkets. Not many though.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Lots of activity. MEMPHIS, MORALES, and OTHER FBI AGENTS are checking weapons, adjusting bullet proof vests. A technical agent, ADAMS, is handing out voice-activated walkie-talkies.

ADAMS
Listen up. Secret Service is 105.8 megahertz, New Orleans P.D. 103.7 and we are 104.7.

Morales can't resist teasing Memphis.

MORALES
104.7, Memphis. Tejano music to keep you company while you keep the Warehouse District safe.

CONTINUED:

Morales and Vanatter LAUGH as they split.

CUT TO:

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

A large freight elevator rolls up to reveal SWAGGER, MEG, and PAYNE. Payne carries a rifle in a case. We are in the same warehouse Swagger was in previously. Swagger goes to the window. Beyond him we see the clock tower.

PAYNE removes the rifle as MEG talks on a walkie-talkie.

BOB LEE
This is the best place to see the President and the shooter --
-- Payne, give me that sandbag.

Payne and Swagger begin assembling a shooting position.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
How's the rifle, Sergeant?

PAYNE
Remington 40 A1, zeroed for one thousand. It's under minute of angle.

BOB LEE
Ammo?

PAYNE
M852 match accuracy, Lake City arsenal.

BOB LEE
Good man. Are the others in position?

MEG
Pullman is in front. Dobbler has the back door.

BOB LEE
Good. Tell them to keep well hidden. We only need them if he gets away.

Meg talks to Dobbler and Pullman as Swagger sights the rifle.

-- SCOPE P.O.V. - THE CLOCK TOWER. The time reads 10:45.

CUT TO:

EXT. A HIGHWAY LEADING INTO THE CITY - DAY

Traffic is being diverted.

EXT. THE DAIS AT ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

The Dais. Finished. The Secret Service men move relentlessly.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

The PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE leaving the airport -- a gigantic operation, particularly here where all the other dignitaries have vehicles and security of their own.

THE MOTORCADE rolls onto the highway --

-- endless.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - DAY

Memphis on North Rampart driving past police barricades and massive security. He is listening to Tejano music and singing perfect lip-sync as he scans the road ahead.

EXT. ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

HOWARD UTEY is giving orders to Secret Service men on the dais.

DOZENS OF MEN IN SUITS begin to take up positions around Decatur Street and several face the Mississippi River.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREETS - DAY

The motorcade -- POLICE SIRENS SCREAMING -- entering the city.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Bob Lee is hunkered down by the wall. He seems to be miles away. Meg comes over.

MEG
When will he turn up?

BOB LEE
A shooter's bench is cramped. He won't sit there for hours. Periodically he'll check his shot. When he does, I'll see him move.

MEG
Look...about the other day...

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
It's okay. You did your job. Very well.

She looks at Swagger. An apologetic smile then stands and turns away.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY

Memphis has stopped listening to music. He's just cruising.

If nothing else, he is professional. He sees everything--

-- A van idling. A street corner drug buy. Two neighborhood women with strollers, gossiping.

Memphis listens to SECURITY RADIO TRAFFIC -- logging the President's progress.

RADIO VOICE
Alpha Response to Alpha Four. Let me have your position.

MEMPHIS
Alpha Four to Alpha Response. Travelling North on Dauphine. Approaching intersection of Martinique.

RADIO VOICE
Roger Alpha Four. Standby. Flashlight has arrived.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

And for the first time -- the media.

TV cameras up the kazoo. Performers clearing their throats.

Photographers grumbling about their rotten position.

Print people even worse off.

EXT. BACKSTAGE AT ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

The PRESIDENT presses the flesh with all the South American dignitaries.

He pays particular attention a Pudgy Guy with Thick Glasses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

You get the feeling they don't trust each other all that much.

But then, you get the feeling about all of them and our President.

Forced gentility.

Then suddenly, they all move on stage together --

-- sudden unexpected applause --

EXT. THE VIEW FROM THE DAIS - DAY

-- and thousands of people are there.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Swagger is looking through the scope. Payne is next to him.

PAYNE
Mind if I ask something, sir?

BOB LEE
Go ahead.

PAYNE
How did you know I was a marine the other day?

BOB LEE
Your service ring.

Payne looks down, then back to Swagger.

He's impressed --

-- So is MEG.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY

Memphis, in his car, cruising the streets -- listening to the President's speech on the staticky radio -- the usual clinched words come occasionally through -- 'democracy can and will triumph' -- 'we are all God's neighbors' -- that kind of thing.

INT. THE EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Swagger -- he suddenly raises his rifle --

CUT TO:

SCOPE P.O.V. - THE WINDOW BELOW THE CLOCK FACE. Nothing. No movement... yet.

CUT TO:

MEG, looking at Swagger. Edgy.

BOB LEE
He'll be coming right about now.

MEG
(into radio)
Base one. Ginger Dragon One and Two. On alert.

EXT. THE DAIS AT LOUIS ARMSTRONG PARK - DAY

The President, speaking without notes. He does it beautifully.

The South American Leaders are all lined up close by -- The Pudgy Guy with thick glasses is closest --

-- and does not seem remotely enthralled by what he is hearing.

THE CROWD. Quiet, respectful.

THE SKY -- helicopters circling.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Swagger is in his bubble.

He is still -- his voice calm -- he sights along the rifle.

SCOPE P.O.V. -- the window below the clock face --

-- NOTHING -- <u>then a shadow</u>.

BOB LEE
He's there.

MEG AND PAYNE move in to look. Meg whispers into radio as they all stare at --

-- THE CLOCK TOWER -- the window below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- NOW A SILHOUETTE -- A MAN AND A RIFLE --

CLOSE ON BOB LEE -- like stone.

CUT TO:

INT. MEMPHIS'S CAR - DAY

Memphis, cruising along, listening to the speech.

EXT. THE DAIS AT ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

The President, arms raised now, accepting applause. The Pudgy Man with thick glasses glances at the other leaders, then starts applauding too --

INT. THE EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

SWAGGER. CLOSE UP, finger curled around the trigger --

EXTREME CLOSE UP SCOPE P.O.V. OF WINDOW --

-- SHOOTER IS SIGHTING!

EXT. THE DAIS AT ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

The President. Arms out wide, embracing the world.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

SCOPE P.O.V. -- crosshairs on silhouette in window.

-- CLOCK reads 11:59.

-- SWAGGER PULLS THE TRIGGER.

SCOPE P.O.V. -- bullet hits glass.

-- IT DOES NOT BREAK. IT CRAZES!

CLOSE ON SWAGGER. In shock.

SCOPE P.O.V. -- muzzle flash as shot fired.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DAIS AT ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

-- chaos --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- Secret Service men charge in from all over and this is what you hear: **'Flashlight is down!'**

EXT. THE TOP OF THE MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM - DAY

-- shock -- and silence and --

EXT. ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

THE CROWD as panic hits and --

THE MEDIA, surging past their barricades toward the dais and some of them slip and some fall but on and on they come and --

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

CLOSE ON SWAGGER - astonished..

BOB LEE
Bullet proof! They changed the glass.

HE turns toward MEG.

-- AND SHE SHOOTS HIM AT POINT BLANK RANGE.

-- High in the chest --

-- He slams back against the wall and slides down, blood pouring from the wound, eyes open -- as if dead.

-- BUT HE'S NOT --

NOTE: Everything moves fast now and is mostly seen from Bob Lee Swagger's point of view.

-- Payne disassembles the rifle --

-- Meg opens the freight elevator door and starts counting --

MEG
Sixty seconds.

-- DOBBLER AND PULLMAN come in with a UNIFORMED NEW ORLEANS COP...TIMMONS.

-- MEG wipes the handgun and puts it in TIMMONS' hand --

-- Dobbler and Pullman grab Bob Lee and drag him into another room --

MEG
Thirty...

CONTINUED:

-- and now Swagger's eyes go wide --

-- because Dobbler is holding a rifle in his hands --

-- and if you think you've seen it before, you're right --

-- it's Swagger's rifle --

-- Dobbler lays it across the shooter's bench --

-- and now Dobbler places something on the floor --

-- it's a spent cartridge -- he places it beside the rifle.

-- Swagger lies still as before, but in his eyes now you can see at last he has something going for him: **rage** --

MEG, surveying it all, satisfied --

-- she looks at her watch.

MEG
Ten.

-- Payne stashes rifle, cartridges, and radios in a duffel bag --

MEG (CONT'D)
Let's go...Timmons, call it in.

MEG, takes one last look at Swagger, then she's gone --

-- followed by DOBBLER, PULLMAN, AND PAYNE --

-- Leaving Timmons alone -- and nervous --

TIMMONS
(into radio)
Base one. This is Victor 127. Shot fired at man with rifle. Corner of Felicity and Magazine.

BOB LEE SWAGGER, taking it in -- NOT DEAD -- ALIVE --

Timmons looks at Swagger, then turns away as he frantically repeats his message.

TIMMONS (CONT'D)
Repeat. Shot fired. Man with rifle. Corner of Felicity and...

-- and Swagger lurches to his feet and crashes into TIMMONS, sending him sprawling --

-- Swagger stumbles to the elevator --

CONTINUED: (2)

-- TIMMONS recovers and fires. The shot splinters the woodwork near Swagger's head --

-- Swagger crashes into the elevator and pulls down the door as another shot slams into it.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Swagger punches the down button and stuffs his shirt into his wound.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Timmons is desperately trying to recall the elevator. He gives up.

TIMMONS
Base one. Victor 127. Suspect is on the loose. Repeat...

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY

Nick Memphis -- listening to panicked secret service radio traffic when he overhears Timmons.

TIMMONS (V.O.)
-- suspect is on the loose. Corner of Felicity and Magazine --

Memphis guns the accelerator and does a SCREECHING U-TURN.

EXT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Swagger lurches out into the daylight. Across the road is a construction site . A big one. Lots of vehicles.

THE WORKERS are oblivious to what's been happening. A pickup truck with building materials is idling. THE DRIVER stands TALKING to a CONSTRUCTION WORKER.

Swagger jumps into the vehicle and floors it. The door SLAMS SHUT as the truck LURCHES forward. The driver and construction worker leap to safety.

INT. EAGLE'S NEST - DAY

Timmons sees Swagger escape in the truck. He frantically YELLS into his radio.

CONTINUED:

TIMMONS
...suspect in red pickup heading west on Felicity.

INT. NICK MEMPHIS' CAR - DAY

Memphis hears the RADIO DISPATCH and hangs a hard right.

EXT. ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

Choppers lift into the air. People are still lying on the ground, terrified.

-- police cars SCREAM PAST --

-- chaos -- as security men from eight countries form a wall around an ambulance --

INT. VAN - DAY

Meg, Dobbler, Pullman, and Payne are all travelling across the Mississippi River. CHOPPERS WHIRL overhead. Police cars SCREAM PAST. They are listening to the police radio.

MEG
Christ! He's not dead. Goddam that cop's gun!

DOBBLER
What if he talks?

MEG
Who is going to believe him? --
-- don't worry. He's finished.

CUT TO:

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

THE VIEW FROM SWAGGER'S EYES -- more blurred than before, the surroundings seem to blend -- he's practically driving blind now.

EXT. THE DAIS IN LOUIS ARMSTRONG PARK - DAY

-- and it's all hushed here, it all seems to be in slow motion here --

-- but this much is clear: men are <u>sobbing</u> --

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

THE VIEW FROM SWAGGER'S EYES --

-- more dangerously clouded than ever --

SWAGGER, and suddenly he slaps himself --

-- hard --

-- and blinks --

-- now he pulls hard at his skin, shocking himself --

THE VIEW FROM SWAGGER'S EYES --

-- better -- a little bit clearer than before --

THE TRUCK, roaring on.

EXT. THE DAIS IN ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

An ambulance, slowly nudging its way toward the platform Motorcycle cops move with it, dozens of them.

MORALES AND VANATTER flank the ambulance guns drawn scanning rooftops -- NOISE AND CHAOS --

MORALES
(shouting into radio)
Alpha Nine to Alpha Four -- Memphis, where are you?

INT. MEMPHIS' CAR - DAY

Barrelling through an intersection. Narrowly missing a garbage truck.

MEMPHIS
Alpha Four. Morales -- what happened? Who got shot?

EXT. ARTILLERY PARK - DAY

As Morales YELLS back at Memphis the SOUND OF AN OVERHEAD CHOPPER drowns out her response --

-- We don't hear what she says!

INT. MEMPHIS' CAR - DAY

Memphis listens to Morales in his earpiece. We don't hear her response. We just read the look on Memphis' face.

-- Suddenly the red pickup crosses before his eyes --

-- Memphis pulls on the handbrake, executing a classic 180° SCREECHING RUBBER BURNING TURN.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

BOB LEE SWAGGER -- in pain.

But sucking it up -- like the Marine that he is.

He sees Memphis roar up behind him and begin to pass in the opposite lane.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - DAY

Memphis has pulled even with Swagger in the truck and is gesturing for him to get the hell off the road and --

SWAGGER, gunning the truck and --

WHERE THEY ARE -- and it's on a two lane road heading out of the Warehouse District running alongside the 'levee', the artificial flood wall that flanks the Mississippi River --

-- but it's still hairy, at least it is for Memphis as every so often a vehicle comes toward him and he has to pull back, laying behind the truck and --

SWAGGER, and the wound has started bleeding worse and he takes a hand off the wheel, wipes the blood off as best he can, grips the wheel again, the wheel bloody now and --

MEMPHIS, pulling out even with the truck and now he holds his pistol in his hand and --

SWAGGER, seeing it, immediately slowing down enough to drift back out of the firing line and --

MEMPHIS, slowing, dropping even with Swagger again and --

-- and shit --

-- here comes another car in his lane so he has to cut back behind the truck again and --

SWAGGER, and the instant the police car slows he guns it -- roaring off ahead and --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS, hits the accelerator and pulls alongside again --

THE VIEW FROM SWAGGER'S EYES -- clouding again.

BOB LEE
(like a mantra)
-- go -- go -- go! -- **go** --

He is breathing terribly as he wills himself back and --

THE VIEW FROM SWAGGER'S EYES -- clearing --

-- and now he does something no one expects -- he spins the wheel and slams the truck right against the police car and --

THE TWO CARS out of control --

-- they hit the curb together,

-- jump it together --

-- slam into the levee wall together --

-- and for a moment, you can't tell who got the worst of it.

MEMPHIS. He did -- almost unconscious behind the wheel, he blinks and gasps for air as we --

SWAGGER and his truck is wasted, but he manages to fall out from behind the steering wheel, makes it to the police car and --

MEMPHIS as Swagger grabs his Glock automatic, yanks him out of the truck to the ground -- and now this --

CLOSE UP OF SWAGGER AND MEMPHIS --

-- HUGE FUCKING CLOSE UP --

-- AND MEMPHIS KNOWS THIS: **HE IS GOING TO DIE.**

SWAGGER, the gun pointed --

MEMPHIS, waiting, eyes open --

SWAGGER, the gun cocked and ready --

BOB LEE
...Name?

MEMPHIS
Memphis...FBI.

CONTINUED: (2)

BOB LEE
(hard to speak)
...Listen...Memphis...I did not...shoot the President.

-- suddenly their eyes lock --

-- and MEMPHIS knows this: **HE'S NOT GOING TO DIE TODAY.**

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
...and...Timmons...did not...shoot me...

-- MEMPHIS --

-- SWAGGER --

-- inches away from each other -- then --

SWAGGER, clambering past Memphis, getting in, driving the hell away as --

MEMPHIS, watching for a moment, lying there, cut, clothes torn, watching as his car disappears back to the road they were on before the turn and --

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Swagger in the police car, listening to the staticky radio, which is hard as hell for him to make out.

He grabs Memphis' sports jacket, gropes into the pocket.

He pulls out a handkerchief, wipes his wound as best he can.

He pulls out candy bars, a pocketknife, takes them.

Now Memphis' wallet -- a little money. He scrabbles it away. He glances at the I.D.

It says the name NICK MEMPHIS, says he's with the FBI.

Suddenly Swagger look up at --

EXT. THE SKY - DAY

Helicopters are chasing him.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

O.J. Bronco chase. Marksmen try to get a shot.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - DAY

A BUNCH OF POLICE CARS appear from every direction blocking all escape.

INT. MEMPHIS' CAR - DAY

Swagger sees a gate in the levee wall and wrenches the wheel over.

EXT. LEVEE GATE - DAY

Memphis' car fishtails through the levee gate, pursued only by choppers. The car roars into the yawning doorway of a giant wharf shed and disappears.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

The choppers circle around. Where has he gone?

INT. MEMPHIS' CAR - DAY

Swagger is roaring down the center of the warehouse, dodging forklifts and trucks. Ahead he sees daylight --

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - DAY

Memphis is being assisted by New Orleans POLICE. He looks bloody and unhappy.

EXT. PIER - DAY

Memphis' car breaks out into daylight --

INT. MEMPHIS' CAR - DAY

Swagger is sweating heavily as he speeds past the hull of a ship. He is repeating a line to himself as he applies pressure to his wound.

BOB LEE
-- This is nothing. This is nothing --
-- this is nothing.

Up ahead a chopper drops down to his level, guns aimed -- no escape. Swagger looks out as the river is revealed. In the

CONTINUED:

middle of the river -- a train of barges being towed by a tug. He jerks the wheel over.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIER -DAY

Looking past the chopper, WE SEE Memphis' car launch off the pier and into the Mississippi River --

-- and hold --

-- choppers land --

-- police cars arrive, as we --

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

As Memphis' car floats down, Swagger swims up towards the surface. Lungs bursting, he sees above him the large, dark bellies of the river barges.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

Swagger breaks the surface as the barges sweep by -- inches away. He desperately scrabbles for a handhold --

-- then a trailing rope --

-- Swagger grabs it and flips it around his wrist. With his last strength, he collapses against the side of the barge --

-- we hold as Swagger recedes from view --

EXT. THE SKY ABOVE THE RIVER - EARLY AFTERNOON

EXT. THE SKY ABOVE THE CITY - A LITTLE LATER

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

LIVE TELEVISION - UP CLOSE --

-- multi-camera coverage of chaos and confusion --

-- shots of choppers, the chase, car into Mississippi River, police cars, reporters scrambling -- security men reacting -- people screaming -- channel flipping --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- Every channel in the country covering the biggest story in thirty years.

-- A dozen Anchors, pundits, and Geraldos.

-- Then...Officer EUGENE TIMMONS -- on every channel -- surrounded by HUNDREDS OF REPORTERS. OTHER COPS keep them at bay. He is barely visible above the forest of microphones.

TIMMONS
(composed)
...three shots were fired. One hit the suspect in the upper torso...the other two missed...we struggled...suspect then escaped...

An avalanche of questions from REPORTERS: Why? How? When? Etc...

TIMMONS (CONT'D)
(louder)
...I was on patrol in the Warehouse District. Saw a glint of metal in the window...signs of forced entry...drew my service revolver...suspect must have heard me coming...

MORE QUESTIONS. SHOUTED. It's obvious SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS and MEN IN SUITS do not want TIMMONS to say much more.

TIMMONS (CONT'D)
(composure slipping)
...Regrets?...of course...I only wish I had gone in sooner.

-- He has tears in his eyes now --

WOW. What an actor --

-- and then Timmons is led away by a phalanx of INVESTIGATORS and UNIFORMS, pursued by clamoring REPORTERS.

-- Suddenly the TV screen we are watching is silent. A red 'MUTE' icon appears as we --

CUT TO:

NICK MEMPHIS. Seated, bandaged...watching --

-- surrounded by dozens of MEN IN SUITS --

HOWARD UTEY, HAP FENCL, every possible FBI and SECRET SERVICE HEAVYWEIGHT. Almost an inquisition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

UTEY
There it is, Memphis. The cop shot him and you let him get away.

HAP
(exploding)
Now wait a minute...

UTEY
(cold)
For what? Is this in doubt? We've got a hero in uniform and a killer on the run...with your man's gun.

Hap backs off. The other FBI guys all look uncomfortable...as does Nick.

UTEY (CONT'D)
We put a lid on this now. The media is after blood. Memphis gives no interviews until cleared by me. The FBI issues a blanket cover saying Memphis is recovering from injuries.
(beat)
...Now Memphis...exactly what did he say?

MEMPHIS
He said...'I did not shoot the President... and Timmons did not shoot me.'...That's it. Exactly.

UTEY
Describe him.

MEMPHIS
5'11". Maybe 180 pounds. Fifty-ish. Rugged, white male. Southern drawl. Eyes blue. Brown hair...

-- You've got to hand it to Nick, He's good --

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
...scar on right hand. Blue denim shirt...

-- and Memphis stops --

-- <u>because he's looking right at BOB LEE SWAGGER</u> on TV --

-- somebody hits the volume button.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
...identified as <u>Bob Lee Swagger</u>. Fifty, former Marine sniper and Vietnam veteran of McDowell County, West Virginia...

The entire room watches in stunned silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)
...Swagger was reputed to be one the most dangerous men alive, having killed more than 319 enemy soldiers during two tours of Vietnam in...

UTEY EXPLODES. The room erupts in chaos.

UTEY
Jesus Christ! How the fuck did they find out before us? -- Fencl, your guys in Charleston, how fast can they get to McDowell County?

-- Everybody scrambles. The room empties except maybe five or six FBI AGENTS, and MEMPHIS, who is engrossed in the TV --

-- watching Bob Lee Swagger --

-- as we hear the SOUND OF CHOPPERS --

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

The water races beneath us as a military chopper sweeps into view. As we pull back, WE SEE the river swarming with police boats, some stopping River traffic, others close to shore communicating with --

-- every POLICEMAN in New Orleans with every POLICE DOG in New Orleans --

-- searching the riverbank...heavily armed.

-- Military and Police helicopters circle and ROAR past.

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI BRIDGE - DAY

CHAOS -- Backed up traffic. Irate DRIVERS. Road Blocks. More POLICE -- and now arriving --

-- STATE POLICE, heavily armed...a lot of them.

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

The tug and barges that Swagger was lashed to is stopped in midstream. A chopper HOVERS above. A police cruiser slowly

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

moves along the side. It passes the rope that Swagger was holding.

-- Only now -- he has gone.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Memphis still seated. HAP FENCL returns. He sits down next to Memphis.

HAP
Jesus, Nick...

They look at each other -- nothing to be said -- a bad day for the Bureau.

HAP (CONT'D)
Swagger was staying at the Napoleon. We're going over it now.

MEMPHIS
Can I see the hit?

Hap motions to one of the other FBI SUITS, who puts in a videotape --

-- what we see is this:

-- Angle on the dais. The President giving his speech -- cutting to the FIRST LADY -- then the DIGNITARIES. Nodding sagely.

-- a shot of the CROWD applauding --

CLOSE ON MEMPHIS

-- the crowd gets to it's feet, a standing ovation.

-- Now the visiting LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS stand --

EVEN CLOSER ON MEMPHIS, absorbed.

-- The President turns to shake hands with the MAN next to him and --

-- <u>THE MAN NEXT TO THE PRESIDENT IS SHOT IN THE HEAD!</u>

-- Chaos -- Secret Service MEN throw the President to the deck -- the camera becomes shaky, searches left and right then back to chaos.

VERY CLOSE ON MEMPHIS. AND HAP.

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
He missed.

HAP
Yup...he hit Generalissimo Manuel Orejuala, the Ecuadorean leader.

Memphis grabs the remote and rewinds. Again we watch the same footage. Just as OREJUALA is shot, we cut back to Memphis, Hap and the others. TWO OF THE AGENTS behind Memphis wince visibly. Memphis is concentrating.

MEMPHIS
(to himself)
He missed.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS AIRPORT - DUSK.

SOLDIERS are pouring out of Military aircraft.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER ROAD - DAY

Army trucks pull up and stop. A hundred NATIONAL GUARDSMEN with portable lighting and guns fan out into swampland.

EXT. LOUISIANA SWAMP - DUSK

A MILITARY HELICOPTER, lights blazing, approaches out of a smoky sunset. It's powerful beam probes the swamp below.

IN THE SWAMP -- the beam of light travels towards us illuminating the exposed roots of a cypress tree. Then it's gone --

-- leaving only moonlight -- and a man's arm --

-- belonging to BOB LEE SWAGGER.

Still bleeding.

Still alive.

Wearing Nick Memphis' jacket.

He looks in bad shape, but his face shows a will...to survive.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

MORALES is driving MEMPHIS home. He looks exhausted...but deep in thought.

MEMPHIS
Why did Swagger tell me he didn't kill the President and the cop didn't shoot him?

MORALES
Who knows, man? He's a psycho. He'll say anything.

She pulls into Memphis' driveway. Immediately, they are besieged by REPORTERS AND NEWSCAMERAS. Lights blind Memphis as he and Morales struggle to his front door.

REPORTER (FEMALE)
Do you feel you've let your country down?

Nick stops dead.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
The assassin took your pistol, took your car. You let him get away. Any regrets?

NICK. Just stares at her. Then --

MEMPHIS
(not the high point of his life)
You couldn't lift them, lady...

EXT. LOUISIANA SWAMP - NIGHT

MOONLIGHT -- The sound of FROGS and CICADAS...and SPLASHING. Swagger is moving through water...but not aimlessly. He is looking for something.

-- and he finds it --

-- moss and fungus growing on a stump --

-- he strips the growth and stuffs the moss into his mouth and chews it.

CLOSE ON SWAGGER, he's feverish.

-- He spits out the pulpy moss and rips open his shirt -- and we see the bullet hole -- small, but dark and clotted with blood --

-- He stuffs the wad of pulpy moss into the wound.

CONTINUED:

-- We've seen this before...with the deer.

-- He tears his shirt and binds the poultice in place. Then sinks down semi-conscious.

CLOSE ON SWAGGER --

-- WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CHOPPER --

EVEN CLOSER ON SWAGGER --

-- His eyes open up to see --

EXT. VIETNAM - DAY

-- a helicopter is landing -- blinding sunshine -- and military medics are jumping to ground. They are American soldiers and the helicopter has a red cross on it.

MEDIC
(looking around -- pointing)
-- this one's alive --

SWAGGER, and we're back in Vietnam -- he's young again, and barely alive.

MEDIC
(running toward Swagger)
-- Doc, get over here.

CUT TO:

A YOUNG DOCTOR, A CAPTAIN, moving to Swagger, kneeling beside him.

DOCTOR
You've lost a lot of blood, soldier --

Swagger tries to nod.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
-- but this is nothing -- say that --

BOB LEE
(trying so hard)
...this... is nothing...

DOCTOR
Believe it!

BOB LEE
(louder)
...this is... nothing...

CONTINUED:

THE ORDERLIES running with a stretcher, coming toward him. The Medic with them.

MEDIC
The other one's dead, sir.

And as he points --

SWAGGER turns to see --

DONNY FENN lying nearby.

Now Swagger's in the stretcher -- as they lift him --

SWAGGER, staring at Donny, cannot take his eyes away.

They put him in the helicopter --

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SWAMP - IT'S STILL NIGHT

-- Swagger blinks awake --

-- looks at his wound --

-- it's badly swollen now -- infection has set in --

BOB LEE
(soft)
...this... is nothing...

EXT. VIETNAM - DAY

High over the landscape --

CLOSE ON SWAGGER, strapped to the stretcher flapping in the wind --

-- looking at the zipped bodybag next to him flapping.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SWAMP - NIGHT

BOB LEE
(one last defiant cry)
This is nothing, you bastards...

CUT TO:

INT. NICK MEMPHIS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Memphis is watching TV. We see Swagger's cabin by the waterfall. DOZENS OF PEOPLE with large letters on their jackets...FBI...ATF. LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT. A REPORTER JABBERS at the camera with an instant psychological profile.

-- It could be the Unabomber's --

REPORTER
' loner...recluse...Vietnam vet...delusional...killed his dog and left suddenly...'

A SHOT OF MIKE. Dead. Gunshot wound --

-- Memphis shakes his head and gets up. He inserts the videotape in his VCR and sits back to watch --

The assassination...again...and again...but we only HEAR IT --

-- because we're watching Memphis.

PLAY...SPEECH...SCREAM...CHAOS -- REWIND --

PLAY...SPEECH...SCREAM...CHAOS.

CLOSE ON MEMPHIS.

Figuring something out.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SWAMP - DEAD OF NIGHT

Swagger, barely conscious, lies against a tree.

His eyes are closed -- his breath comes in gasps --

-- terrible pain --

-- now he opens his eyes --

-- you can see them in the night --

-- here's what else you can see in the night --

-- another pair of eyes --

-- huge --

-- yellow --

-- and worst of all this: moving --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- **an alligator** --

SWAGGER, trying to lift Memphis' gun, trying to aim --

-- but too shaky --

-- way too shaky --

-- and here it comes, thrashing toward him, mouth open --

-- and suddenly this: **KA-BOOM**! -- a rifle shot --

-- the alligator spins, makes a terrible sound --

-- now again: **KA-BOOM**! Another shot, closer --

-- the alligator struggles, then doesn't anymore.

SWAGGER holds his breath.

TWO YOUNG CAJUN MEN APPEAR. They hold rifles --

-- poachers --

-- they hurry into view, loop a rope around the alligator's tail, start to drag it off --

-- SWAGGER can't keep quiet any longer -- he has to gasp --

CUT TO:

THE YOUNG CAJUN MEN --

-- and they freeze --

-- spin --

-- rifles ready --

CUT TO:

SWAGGER, dying on the ground.

CUT TO:

THE YOUNG CAJUN MEN. They speak to each other quickly in a language we cannot understand.

One of them readies his rifle --

-- SWAGGER just lies there, unable to move --

CUT TO:

THE OTHER YOUNG CAJUN MAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He slaps the rifle away, kneels beside Swagger.

Then he reaches down, studies the wound --

CUT TO:

SWAGGER'S POINT OF VIEW -- the two young faces stare down at him. In their strange language, they argue --

-- SWAGGER shuts his eyes, slides into darkness.

HOLD ON SWAGGER. Then --

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAWN

A spectacular view of New Orleans from up high. Sunlight glinting off skyscraper windows. The tranquility is shattered by a group of helicopters filling the frame.

-- Like a city under siege --

-- Now we hear the CRACKLE of the breakfast RADIO CROWD ...TALK SHOWS...ANALYSES...THEORIES --

-- "The lone gunman" --

-- "grassy knoll" --

-- "conspiracy" --

-- "cover-up" etc. --

-- and NICK MEMPHIS is listening to all of it as we --

CUT TO:

INT. MORALES' CAR - DAY

As they sweep into the parking building of FBI Headquarters. CROWDS OF REPORTERS, NEWSCREWS, ETC. Held back by POLICE. Morales navigates through them.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Memphis and Morales walk through FBI HQ, but things have changed. OTHER AGENTS avoid looking at Memphis.

-- As if they know something he doesn't --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- A social outcast.

INT. HAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Memphis and Morales enter Hap's office to see HOWARD UTEY and FOUR OTHER MEN...a serious bunch --

HAP doesn't look happy -- Memphis looks at him.

UTEY
Agent Memphis. Do you remember this?

Utey hands Memphis a piece of paper.

MEMPHIS
(reads)
Yeah. It's the nut letter from West Virginia...

He stops -- as we see --

JESUS...It's from Bob Lee Swagger.

UTEY
You read this...and did nothing?

MEMPHIS
We read hundreds of these things, for chrissake. It was out of area.

Memphis looks to Hap for help. There is none. Utey grabs the 'nut letter' back from Memphis.

UTEY
Someone slipped it to the networks. We're looking like fools.

-- And he storms from the room, taking his entourage with him. Only Morales, Memphis and Hap are left. You could cut the air with a knife.

CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL SHACK - DAWN

JUST THE BIGGEST LADY YOU EVER SAW.

SWAGGER is staring up at her, eyes barely able to flutter.

She reaches down, gently touches SWAGGER'S FACE. Says something -- we don't know what --

CONTINUED:

-- because it's in French.

CUT TO:

THE TWO YOUNG CAJUN MEN. They lift SWAGGER, stretch him out on a long wooden kitchen table.

THE GREAT CAJUN LADY stands by the stove --

-- heating a large knife.

Satisfied, she goes to SWAGGER -- mutters something to the YOUNG CAJUN MEN.

One of them hold's SWAGGER'S legs.

The other takes a towel, puts it into SWAGGER'S mouth.

THE GREAT CAJUN LADY. She bends over Swagger, mimes opening and closing her mouth.

SWAGGER bites down on the towel.

Now the OTHER YOUNG CAJUN MAN holds his shoulders down.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

VIDEOTAPE: The President opens his arms, turns to the man next to him to shake hands...the man is shot in the head --

-- REWIND -- FAST --

-- The President opens his arms...

CUT TO:

NICK MEMPHIS AND MORALES, watching. HAP comes in.

MEMPHIS
Hap. Look at this...what do you see?

HAP
(tired)
Nick, I've seen this...we've all seen this.

MEMPHIS
Watch the flag.

The President turns to shake hands with the man next to him --

-- and freezes...before the other man is shot. Behind him a flag hangs limp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAP
So?

MEMPHIS
There was no wind. No glare. A perfect day. Yet Swagger missed by two feet to the left.

Hap and Morales, nothing.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Over that distance, great shooters miss up or down not left or right.

HAP
Nick...

MEMPHIS
Hap. Hear me out. Swagger said, 'I did not shoot the President.' I already knew that the President had not been shot before Swagger crashed into me. Don't you think the assassin would know who he shot! -- What if he was aiming at the other guy?

HAP
Nick. Listen to me. As of now you're officially on leave.

MEMPHIS, stunned.

HAP (CONT'D)
We just got the ballistic report. The bullet came from Swagger's rifle. There is no plot, no conspiracy, and you're reaching too far. ...Go home...don't talk to anyone. Wait 'til the investigation is over.
...Do you understand?

Hap leaves. Memphis looks at Morales. She looks away.

CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL SHACK - DAY

Swagger awakes to the sound of VOICES...MUFFLED...ARCADIAN FRENCH. He struggles to sit up and winces from the pain. We now see that he is cleaned and bandaged. Unsteadily, he staggers to his feet and edges to the window.

-- What he sees is this:

The Cajun Lady and her sons are talking to THREE UNIFORMED POLICE in a small boat. The cops are nosy -- trying to gain

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

access. It's obvious that the woman and her sons will not let them. The police are showing a picture of Swagger. The woman shakes her head.

Then the police are gone --

Swagger collapses back onto the bed. The door opens and the Cajun Lady comes in with some food. She smiles at Swagger. A smile that reassures.

-- We understand...we know...you are like us.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

THE WINDOW THAT SWAGGER USED, from outside.

MEMPHIS. Standing there.

It is guarded by New Orleans police. Memphis shows his ID, they let him in.

INT. THE EAGLES NEST - DAY

THE WINDOW THAT SWAGGER USED, this time from inside. Memphis stares out --

WHERE THE DAIS WAS. Long way away.

MEMPHIS, rests his body against the shooter's bench, mimes the shot.

He stands then, staring out --

-- Figuring something out.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI TECHNICAL DIVISION - DAY

ADAMS, the tech agent we saw earlier is in conversation with another TWO MEN when Memphis enters. He beckons to Adams, who comes over.

MEMPHIS
Harry, I need a favor.

ADAMS
Sure thing, Nick...as long as it's legal...
...Look I heard about...I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS
It's okay. I've been reassigned. That's why I want to requisition a directional microphone.

Adams looks at Memphis. He's not sure...then he goes to cabinet and removes a long metallic case.

ADAMS
The instructions are inside. Just don't use it near any Coke machines.

MEMPHIS, CLOSE.

MEMPHIS
Coke machines?

ADAMS
Yeah. The new ones put out a low-frequency electromagnetic force field. Screws up any acoustic penetration by parabolic microphones.

MEMPHIS, stunned. But thinking...fast.

MEMPHIS
Can any other equipment penetrate?

ADAMS
Sure, but we don't have it. Too expensive. Only one agency can afford it.

MEMPHIS
Who?

ADAMS
The Directorate of Science and Technology...the CIA.

MEMPHIS -- Jesus!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SMALL SHACK - DAY

THE GREAT CAJUN LADY sits in her chair. On the table are some dead reptiles of various shapes and sizes --

-- she is skinning them.

She is also keeping an eye on SWAGGER. He is walking, slowly, and he uses a stick as a cane.

She speaks to him in her way --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- maybe he's learning it a little --

-- because he puts the stick down.

She nods.

And watches as he walks -- slowly and with no power -- but he's still able to move on his own.

They look at each other a moment.

BOTH nod.

She continues working, he continues walking. Her eyes flick out toward him. She mutters to herself -- she's pleased...

INT. STRIP BAR - NIGHT

TIMMONS is at the bar. A hero...surrounded by flesh. The drinks are free and the girls are everywhere...and available. Timmons is in heaven...a well-tattooed STRIPPER is all over him when MEMPHIS suddenly appears beside him. Memphis smiles.

TIMMONS
Hey...Memphis. Right?

Memphis nods. Smiles at stripper.

MEMPHIS
Got a moment?

Memphis moves to a booth in the rear. Timmons kisses the stripper and reluctantly comes over to join Memphis.

TIMMONS
There <u>is</u> a God!...What's up, Memphis?

MEMPHIS
I was looking at your TV interview...you weren't wearing your name tag.

TIMMONS
(cautious)
I guess it fell off in the struggle.

MEMPHIS
I'm curious...how did Swagger know what your name was?

TIMMONS
What?

MEMPHIS
Swagger said, 'Timmons did not shoot me.'... How did he know your name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIMMONS
(angry)
How do I know? Look Memphis, I'm sorry you fucked up, but don't try to take me down with you.

Timmons gets up angrily and leaves the booth. But not before Memphis gets in a parting shot.

MEMPHIS
By the way, Timmons...you can't see a rifle from where you said you saw it.

Timmons looks back at Memphis. Anger replaced by fear now. Memphis smiles and leaves. Timmons watches him go.

CUT TO:

EXT. STRIP BAR - NIGHT

Timmons comes out of the club and hurries to a pay phone. He looks around, then dials. WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL --

-- Memphis aiming the directional microphone, wearing headphones.

We clearly hear the PHONE BEEPS, but the conversation is muddied by a PASSING VEHICLE.

HOLD ON MEMPHIS

CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL SHACK - DAY

CLOSE UP. TELEVISION. A REPORTER is talking to camera. POLICE are searching behind her.

REPORTER
...speculation is mounting that Bob Lee Swagger may indeed be already dead...
...In other news, the Federal agent who...

BOB LEE SWAGGER, watching. Absorbing.

He looks healthier. Focused. And he's looking at a rerun of --

NICK MEMPHIS, outside his apartment, ambushed by the TV CREW.

MEMPHIS
(sad)
'...you couldn't lift them, lady.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER (V.O.)
...Agent Memphis is no longer on the active duty roster and has so far made no comment...

SWAGGER, looks down at --

-- MEMPHIS' FBI ID CARD...in his hand --

-- He's figuring it out.

CUT TO:

INT. MEG'S OFFICE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

MEG is watching the same item on TV as Pullman comes in. We see a nameplate on her desk...AMANDA MARTIN...(we'll never know Pullman's real name).

PULLMAN
We've got trouble. -- This guy -- (indicates Memphis) got to Timmons...he's rattled.

MEG
I hate loose ends. You'd better get back to New Orleans.

Pullman leaves. Meg goes to the window deep in thought. We see the Capitol Dome beyond her.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SMALL SHACK - DAY

Swagger is about to get into a small boat with the two young Cajun men. The Cajun Lady watches from the porch. Swagger walks back to her -- fit -- healthy. They look at each other. Then Swagger embraces her...and she him.

He grimaces as it hurts his wound. She LAUGHS --

-- Swagger as well, an unusual emotion for him --

He looks at her with gratitude and then he's gone --

CUT TO:

EXT. LOUISIANA SWAMP - DUSK

The POACHERS and SWAGGER move slowly through the cypress trees -- a spooky sight. No one says a word --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly the engine is cut and they drift. All three look over to see --

LIGHTS, on searching boats...and DISTANT CONVERSATION.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF SWAMP - TWILIGHT

One Cajun stays in the boat. The other stands on shore. He shakes hands with Swagger and then pulls something from his jacket --

-- NICK MEMPHIS' GUN.

Swagger nods his appreciation. The Cajun bids farewell in French, and then they're gone --

Leaving Swagger. Armed and dangerous.

CUT TO:

INT. MEMPHIS' APARTMENT - DAY

THE FRONT DOOR. Someone is <u>pounding</u> on it.

MEMPHIS
(calling out)
Yeah, who?

THE FRONT DOOR. The pounding is <u>harder</u>. Unceasing --

MEMPHIS
Knock it off, all right?

<u>More</u> pounding.

NICK, curses to himself, goes to the door, throws it open --

PAYNE is standing there.

A taser in his hand.

Which is an electrical stun gun --

-- it fires darts on wires --

-- Payne fires and the darts land --

-- Memphis manages a gasp of shock --

-- then he's <u>out</u> --

EXT. MEMPHIS' APARTMENT - DUSK

We see TWO VEHICLES drive off. The angle suggests that they are being observed.

EXT. THE LOUISIANA BAYOU AREA - DUSK

A STRANGE PLACE. Miles beyond civilization. A clearing. A dark lake nearby. Trees not far.

MEMPHIS lies semi-conscious by the lake.

Handcuffed.

Payne sits alongside him. Then he takes out his pistol, checks it carefully, the metallic sound intentionally loud.

PAYNE
(to Memphis)
Just getting ready.

MEMPHIS
(eyes fluttering)
For what?

CUT TO:

THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING where Payne's car is parked. Another car pulls out up alongside and Dobbler gets out.

MEMPHIS
That's my car.

PAYNE
You had to get here somehow, right?

Payne pulls Memphis into a sitting position.

Dobbler, walking toward them -- he holds a piece of paper.

DOBBLER
It's a really great suicide note.
(to Memphis)
You felt so bad letting the Bureau down, you just couldn't face it anymore.

MEMPHIS -- glancing around the area -- nothing. No one.

MEMPHIS
(scared shitless, sure, but angry too)
Who the fuck are you people?

CONTINUED:

PAYNE. Taking out his handcuff keys, jingling them.

PAYNE
And here's what you must know -- you can go pain free, or you can suffer mightily -- you saw the guy in the motel, didn't you? Well, he suffered mightily. All up to you.

MEMPHIS
(shocked)
You killed Bedoya? Why? What did he know?

PAYNE, and he starts laughing --

MEMPHIS
-- what's so goddamn funny? --

PAYNE
-- those are our questions --

DOBBLER
-- you're supposed to tell me what you've found out --

PAYNE. He unlocks Memphis now, starts to lift him to his feet. Memphis is still to week to struggle much.

MEMPHIS
-- I haven't found out shit --
(beat -- to Payne)
-- you killed Swagger's dog too, didn't you? --

DOBBLER

(head shake)
-- that was me --
(to Payne)
-- this guy really doesn't know anything --

MEMPHIS
I'm not gonna beg, you bastards --

DOBBLER
-- sure you will --

DOBBLER AND PAYNE and they are good -- they work quickly and in silence and --

MEMPHIS, AS PAYNE takes his right hand, forces it up toward his temple --

-- DOBBLER, holding Memphis like a vice.

CONTINUED: (2)

DOBBLER (CONT'D)
I think a little less tilted.

PAYNE
(adjusting his pistol)
Got it. Thanks.

DOBBLER
Perfect. Go.

Payne nods.

-- then Payne's eye is blown out --

-- his body crumbles --

DOBBLER, grabbing Memphis, using him for a hostage in the direction the shot came from.

THE LAKE, and the surrounding woods -- not even ripples on the water.

DOBBLER, moving entirely behind Memphis -- he moves his gun toward Memphis' mouth --

DOBBLER
(shouting it out)
I'm not giving you a target --

THE LAKE AND THE WOODS. Nothing moves.

MEMPHIS. CLOSE UP. He stands there frozen, the pistol by his mouth now.

The BARREL goes into his mouth.

DOBBLER'S finger muscles tight on the trigger --

-- NICK closes his eyes.

-- And DOBBLER'S finger flies off --

-- he shrieks and stumbles --

-- but then he grabs the pistol with his other hand, and as he is about to fire at Memphis --

-- a hole --

-- between the eyes --

-- Dobbler falls.

MEMPHIS. He drops to his knees, closes his eyes for a moment, opens them again, looks straight ahead --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

-- and here he comes --

-- walking slowly out from behind the trees, Memphis' pistol in his hands.

BOB LEE SWAGGER --

-- the wrath of God --

SWAGGER AND MEMPHIS. Their second meeting.

BOB LEE
I'm Bob Lee Swagger.
(handing over the gun)
And I think this is yours.

MEMPHIS
(beat -- still in shock)
How in the world did you find me?

BOB LEE
Saw your apartment on TV. I hot-wired a pickup truck. Saw these two drive off with you.

MEMPHIS
So now they can nail you with car theft.

BOB LEE
Least I did it.

MEMPHIS. He looks at the other man a moment.

MEMPHIS
You didn't try and kill the President?

BOB LEE
If I wanted to kill him, he'd be dead.

MEMPHIS
Then why did they kill the man beside him?

SWAGGER. No good answer.

BOB LEE
That I don't know. But I aim to find out.
(beat)
With your help.

MEMPHIS, astonished...what is this?

-- Memphis looks at the gun in his hand --

-- looks at Swagger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MEMPHIS
You know I could take you in and be a hero.

BOB LEE
Wake up, pork. It's mornin'.

They face each other now. Each man with his own thoughts --

Memphis pockets the gun...a sign of trust.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
Good. Give me a hand with these two.

Swagger rolls Payne to the edge of the swamp. He removes Payne's Marine ring and pockets it. He strips off Payne's clothes.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
Always sad to see a Marine go bad.

He kicks Payne's body into the swamp. Memphis drags Dobbler over and together they dump his body as well.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
Goin' to make some damn gators happy, that's for sure.

Then Swagger goes over to Dobbler's vehicle. He releases the handbrake and lets it roll down into the swamp.

-- Memphis, watching it disappear.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
And now, Pork...
...let's go huntin'.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

Memphis' car drives towards New Orleans framed by a smoky sunset.

INT. MEMPHIS' CAR - DUSK

Swagger is wearing Payne's clothes and a hat. The RADIO is on. A classic talk show about the role of the gun in American society. Bob Lee turns it off.

BOB LEE
You know they'll try to kill you again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS
I know. We have one advantage. They don't know I'm not dead...yet.

BOB LEE
I have to find the shooter.

MEMPHIS
How do we do that?

BOB LEE
There are ways. I know of a man who might help.

MEMPHIS
Did you know they matched the bullet to your rifle?

BOB LEE
Did they now? Mighty clever of them.

MEMPHIS
We have one good lead, you know.

BOB LEE
(nods)
Timmons.

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP BAR - NIGHT

The joint is jumping and packed with the people. Transvestites, hookers, tourists, and regular strippers. Timmons is, as always, a big hit. The tattooed stripper we saw him with before has her hand on his crotch and her tongue in his ear. Now she's whispering in his ear. Whatever she said, he's agreed to -- because now they are pushing through the crowd to the rear of the club.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND STRIP BAR - NIGHT

Timmons and the STRIPPER stagger into the alleyway. She leads him around a corner and pushes him against the wall. Slowly, she drops to her knees and gropes at his trousers.

TIMMONS CLOSE, in ecstasy.

Suddenly a SCREAM from nearby. Timmons looks around to see A TOURIST being mugged. Timmons grabs for his gun and moves forward.

TIMMONS
Hey...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- And he is shot in the face --

-- by PULLMAN, who knocks out the tourist and takes his wallet.

The stripper looks down at Timmons' body, then smiles at Pullman as he approaches. Pullman gives some money to the stripper and returns her smile --

-- then shoots her at point blank range.

Pullman retrieves the money and walks away as we --

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

An edge of town anonymous bungalow motel.

A car pulls up at the bungalow furthest from the office. Memphis gets out with a suitcase and several grocery bags. He enters the bungalow --

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Memphis enters and dumps the contents on the bed. Swagger emerges from the bathroom, stripped to the waist. He has been dressing his wound. Memphis turns on the TV.

MEMPHIS
They got Timmons.

BOB LEE
They're cleaning up.

Every channel is alive with the news. We see the alley cordoned off. POLICE everywhere. THE BLOODIED TOURIST is talking to a reporter.

TOURIST
'...I was being attacked and this officer came to my help. He died trying to save me...I'll never forget his bravery...'

Memphis and Swagger watch. As the piece continues..."Tragedy, selfless hero, etc...", Swagger removes his bandages and Memphis sees his wounds.

MEMPHIS
Jesus! Let me help you with that.

Memphis begins bathing and bandaging Swagger. He sees all the other scars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
You can't take much more of this, you know.
(beat)
You're lucky the shot went right through.

SWAGGER
Solid point 9mm. They had to use the cop's gun.

MEMPHIS
Thorough.

SWAGGER
Very. They played me like a fish on a line...
...but they made one mistake.

MEMPHIS
What's that?

CLOSE UP. SWAGGER.

SWAGGER
They left me alive.

Memphis finishes bandaging Swagger and pulls a pizza and beer from a grocery bag. They wolf it down.

MEMPHIS
We're running out of leads.

SWAGGER
I still got mine, pork. Gonna require some travel though.
(beat)
And I'm a mighty wanted man.

MEMPHIS
I've been thinking about that...
Try this on for size.

He flips open the suitcase and we see --

-- a cap and jacket emblazoned with three very familiar letters --

-- FBI.

SWAGGER, looks at Memphis, who grins.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Welcome to the Bureau, Pardner.

CUT TO:

INT. MEG/AMANDA'S OFFICE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Pullman comes in and sits down. He puts his feet on her desk, very cocky. One withering look from Meg is enough to make him remove them. She throws a folder at him.

MEG
They found Andrews and McTeague in the swamp...or what was left of them. Autopsy shows 9mm bullet holes in both...between the eyes, from a distance...
...McTeague's ring was missing.
(beat)
So is Memphis.

PULLMAN, no longer cocky.

PULLMAN
Swagger...he's alive!

MEG
Worse. They're together. Memphis cleared out. Bureau has no idea where he is.

PULLMAN
So? What can they do? Timmons is history.

MEG
You idiot. Swagger will go after our shooter. When he finds him, we'll be there too...
...with a lot of extra firepower. How many independent contractors can you put together?

PULLMAN
Maybe twenty...expensive.

Meg just looks at him.

PULLMAN (CONT'D)
What makes you think Swagger will find our shooter?

MEG
Because I'm going to help him.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOUISIANA/MISSISSIPPI STATE LINE - DAY

-- ROADBLOCK --

-- STATE TROOPERS - LINES OF TRAFFIC - NO WAY AROUND --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- MEMPHIS AND SWAGGER drive past the line of cars.

Both are dressed in full FBI FIELD OPERATIONS clothes and hats. Swagger wears sunglasses. A STATE TROOPER approaches. Memphis shows his ID. The trooper only glances at Swagger before waving them on...why wouldn't he?

BOB LEE
Very slick, pork...

Swagger. He lifts his sunglasses.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
...Makes me mighty pleased I didn't shoot y'all back there in New Orleans.

Swagger grins...Memphis shakes his head.

-- Goddam, this man has a dry sense of humor.

MEMPHIS
Mind telling me where we're going?

BOB LEE
The shooter is the key... and the rifle. Ain't but five or six men in the world could have made that shot...and I'm one of em...
(beat)
We're going to Tennessee, pork...the patron state of long distance shooting.

MEMPHIS. Christ, what's he getting into --

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Morales is at the computer. The phone RINGS. She picks it up.

-- And instantly becomes alert...and furtive.

MORALES
(whispering)
Memphis. What...??

CUT TO:

EXT. REMOTE GAS STATION TENNESSEE - DAY

Memphis inside the phone booth. Swagger in the car beyond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS
Morales...can't explain. Reply to me only in Spanish, o.k.? Treat me like a routine contact.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

MORALES
Si...

EXT. REMOTE GAS STATION TENNESSEE - DAY

Memphis places a small tape recorder next to the phone.

MEMPHIS
Record this. Then run a trace on it. I'll call you back.

Memphis plays the dial tones from the Timmons phone call.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Also. The Bedoya hit and the Presidential hit are connected. Call Ecuador, talk to whoever you can. ...Morales, help me. Don't believe what you hear.

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

MORALES
(in Spanish - subtitled)
I hear some strange things man. The official story is that you've become... unbalanced.

EXT. REMOTE GAS STATION TENNESSEE - DAY

MEMPHIS
What do you think?

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

MORALES
(Spanish subtitled)
(beat)
...You were always unbalanced. It's what attracts me to you.

EXT. REMOTE GAS STATION TENNESSEE - DAY

MEMPHIS
Morales. I love you, we'll have fifteen kids. So long...

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Morales smiles. Hey, it may only be a joke, but...

She hangs up. Hits rewind on her digital recorder. Pulls out the tape and puts it in her pocket. She gets up and turns to leave the room --

-- only to run into HAP FENCL and HOWARD UTEY --

-- AND MEG.

HAP
Morales. This is Amanda Martin from the Agency...she wants a few words.

MEG. CLOSE. She smiles...the smile of a barracuda.

CUT TO:

EXT. TENNESSEE FARMHOUSE - DAY

Memphis and Swagger drive up a narrow dirt road through thick woods to arrive at an old farmhouse with a porch. A large barn is nearby. They have changed into civilian clothes.

-- AN OLD WOMAN sits in a porch swing watching as they get out and approach.

OLD LADY
(calling out)
Two men, one tall, fifties, the other thirties, nervous.

BOB LEE
Remember what I told you pork.

Now, from inside the house, a voice.

RATE (O.S.)
Wanting?

MEMPHIS
(answering)
Bullets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RATE (O.S.)
Kind?

MEMPHIS. A beat.

MEMPHIS
.300 H&H Magnum. 70 grains of H48-31. Ships at 2539 feet per second. Thousand yards: 198 inch drop to a hair.

He stops, waits.

THE HOUSE. No sound.

THE VERY OLD LADY. She shakes her head, starts back into the house.

MEMPHIS, tense, looking at Swagger who stands like a rock. Then --

THE HOUSE. From inside now: cackling.

THE OLD WOMAN. As she waves them in --

INT. FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON

RATE. He is blind. He is frail. He will never see 70 again.

-- and this is an amazing place -- filled with books about gun lore and framed photographs of soldiers and hunters when they were great.

RATE
Don't get many visitors.

MEMPHIS
We happened to be in the area --

RATE
(sharp head shake)
-- nobody's ever in this area -- only reason to be in this area is me.

Now he rises, moves quickly toward an old refrigerator. He move as if he had sight.

THE REFRIGERATOR as he opens it -- filled with handmade bullets.

RATE takes out several boxes, bags them, closes the door, hands the bag to Memphis.

CONTINUED:

RATE
(pointing to the door)
The Duchess handles the finances.

SWAGGER, watching as Rate sits at his desk.

RATE (CONT'D)
Didn't hear no footsteps.

Swagger says nothing.

RATE (CONT'D)
Means you didn't go.
(working away)
Means you didn't come here for bullets, means bullets was just a way to get in, means there are secrets in this room and I don't allow no secrets here.
(sharply)
Don't you move --

RATE, as he puts his hands on Swagger's right hand.

Swagger just stands there.

RATE
(touching the index finger)
Trigger callous.
(now he touches Swagger's cheek)
Many a sweet gun has rested here.

MEMPHIS, throat dry, watching as the blind man moves his hand down from Swagger's cheek, down past his neck --

-- his fingers touch Swagger's wound --

-- Swagger winces slightly.

RATE. He and Swagger stare at each other for a moment.

RATE
You followed?

MEMPHIS
Don't think so --

RATE
-- cause the Duchess' heart ain't what it was and she don't need surprises. What kind of law enforcement are you, boy?

Looks at Nick.

NICK. How in the world? --

CONTINUED: (2)

MEMPHIS
I'm with the FBI, sir.

RATE
So, it's information you want? Get to it.

MEMPHIS
How can a bullet fired from one rifle retain the same ballistic markings when re-fired from another?

RATE, and suddenly he's cackling again.

RATE
Easy --
(beat)
-- but then you're too young -- gone out of fashion -- gangster's trick -- Capone did it all the time -- called paper patching --
(he feels for a spent bullet on his work-desk --)
This spent 30.08 -- it's married by its unique markings to the barrel it passed through. But put a simple paper sheath around it, rebarrel to a .318, sabot the round, bam, fwishh -- paper burns off in flight, bullet keeps its original markings.

MEMPHIS. Dazed.

RATE (CONT'D)
Just two reasons to paper patch. Show how smart you are...
...or to frame somebody.

-- And he looks directly at BOB LEE SWAGGER.

-- Who looks at Memphis, then back to Rate.

RATE (CONT'D)
(to Swagger)
Don't recollect hearin' your name, son?

BOB LEE
Didn't give it, sir. No offense, but it might be safer if you didn't know.

RATE, he knows.

RATE
Safe. Who knows what's safe? My great Grandpappy fought three bloody years with General Robert E. Lee, then choked to death on a chicken bone - right there on
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RATE (CONT'D)
that porch.
(beat)
What's on your mind, son?

BOB LEE
I'm lookin' for a rifle that can drop a .750 grain .50 caliber round into a six inch target over 1800 yards...
... and I'm lookin' to find the man behind that rifle.

A beat.

RATE
Seems like a shot like that was made in New Orleans recently. They say Bob Lee Swagger made that shot, but I'm of the opinion he would have hit what he was aiming at.

MEMPHIS. Astonished. Fascinated.

RATE (CONT'D)
Only four other men could have come close. Lucius Finster...too unreliable. Curry Brown...found God recently. Vladimir Solaratov...he's dead. Lon Scott...crippled for life.

SWAGGER. He has to ask.

BOB LEE
Solaratov is dead?

RATE
Brain tumor. 1985

SWAGGER. It sinks in.

BOB LEE
Tell me about Scott, sir.

RATE
An American tragedy. Shot accidentally by his own father...who then killed himself. Left poor Lon Scott confined to a wheelchair.

SWAGGER. Taking it in...

RATE (CONT'D)
You can read about it. Hand me February '67 issue of Benchrest Shooter, young feller.

Memphis looks at a huge pile of old magazines that the old man is pointing at. He starts hunting through them.

CONTINUED: (4)

MEMPHIS
Any idea where we can find Mr. Scott?

RATE
No idea. But you're with the FBI. You'll figure it out.

He CACKLES to himself. Then rises from his chair and walks to Bob Lee Swagger. Looking straight at Swagger, he puts his hand on his shoulder.

RATE (CONT'D)
Walk with me son.

Swagger assists the old man as he walks out onto the porch past his wife. Memphis follows clutching an old magazine.

INT. BARN - DAY

DARKNESS. A CREAKING AND SCRAPING --

-- THEN, a blast of light as the door opens to reveal Rate, Swagger, and Memphis.

MEMPHIS AND SWAGGER. What they see is:

THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF GUNS. Every make and model, size, and type. Rifles and handguns mostly, but some machine guns.

A museum -- No, an art gallery of firearms. Lovingly displayed, catalogued and maintained. Memphis has never seen anything like it...and it shows.

Rate leads them to a vast workbench littered with gun parts. Nearby mounted on a special rack, sits one rifle...unlike any other.

RATE
Don't know if I found the man. Damn sure this is the rifle...or one like it.

BOB LEE
A Black King.

RATE
Winchester model 70. Only ten ever made. Whoever made that shot...
...He had one of these.

Rate walks to the rack and removes the exquisite piece. He hands it to Swagger.

RATE AND SWAGGER. CLOSE.

CONTINUED:

RATE
A man wants to be at his best when he faces his last battle --
(beat)
-- Here -- Take it...I don't shoot as much as I used to...

SWAGGER. CLOSE. -- Rate CACKLES a final time.

CUT TO:

EXT. TENNESSEE ROAD - DAY

Memphis' car drives across an old iron bridge...RATTLING AND CLANKING.

INT. CAR - DAY

Memphis and Swagger are back in their FBI outfits. Swagger is engrossed in the old shooting magazine. Finally, he looks up.

BOB LEE
It was Lon Scott.

MEMPHIS
How do you know that?

BOB LEE
Because he's in a wheelchair. He couldn't prepare the shot. They suckered me into doing it for them. Hell and damnation pork, they got me to be his legs and be the patsy.

Swagger looks out the window -- ashamed at himself.

Memphis glances over at him -- feeling for him.

MEMPHIS
Hey...Bobby Lee, don't take it so hard. We'll take these guys down. I know it...Rate was right. The FBI can find Scott.

SWAGGER. He turns to Memphis...long and hard.

BOB LEE
I can narrow the field.

MEMPHIS
How.

Swagger indicates the magazine.

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
Looks like Lon Scott has a weakness for horses.

CUT TO:

EXT. LON SCOTT'S STABLES - DAWN

CLOSE -- on the most BEAUTIFUL STALLION, nostrils SNORTING, eyes blazing. THEN, he breaks.

-- And runs...like the Thoroughbred that he is --

-- Around a manicured pasture surrounded by white railed fences. An expensive looking pasture. Now TWO MEN are watching the stallion as the first rays of sunlight blaze a hole in the early morning mist.

A MAN in a motorized wheelchair...and ANOTHER MORE RUGGED MAN.

LON SCOTT is, like Swagger, in his fifties, but looks older, more gaunt. He watches the stallion with adoration. His foreman, WEBSTER GREELY, looks more concerned.

GREELY
He's frisky this mornin', Mr. Scott. I'm hoping he won't injure himself.

LON SCOTT
He won't, he's too smart. Look at that speed web. My God it's almost erotic.

Greely looks over at his boss. The wisdom of experience holds his reply. He just looks back at the stallion.

The cellular phone built into the wheelchair RINGS. Scott answers it and slowly his demeanor changes. The eyes narrow, the face sets. A hardness comes across him. He maneuvers the chair out of earshot.

LON SCOTT (CONT'D)
Coming here? Have you lost your mind?

We don't hear the reply, we just watch Scott listening. Slowly, he relaxes. He even smiles. Then he returns to Greely.

LON SCOTT (CONT'D)
Web. I won't need you and the others this weekend. I have some old friends arriving and we'll be staying in the house.

CONTINUED:

GREELY
Sure thing, Mr. Scott. I'll get him back in the stable for you.

Greely moves to his own horse nearby.

LON SCOTT
No. Let him run.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL RAILWAY STATION - DAWN

The world's most forgotten, out of the way, turn-of-the-century railway station -- in the middle of a misty valley.

But it has a telephone --

-- and NICK MEMPHIS is on it.

Behind him, Swagger is sitting on the only platform bench lost in thought. Memphis hangs up the phone and sits next to Swagger. Nick looks concerned.

MEMPHIS
It's beginning to make sense.

SWAGGER. Nothing.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
I ran a trace on a number Timmons called just before he died. It's a Black Ops outfit tied to the CIA, but not part of it...
(laughs)
...they call it the Directorate of Science and Technology...we've all heard stories. Unofficially, they clean up the Government's shit.

SWAGGER, looks at Memphis.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
They're tied to this hit in New Orleans and another I was investigating before you came to town. Both dead guys are from Ecuador. I think my guy was trying to warn me about this other hit and they whacked him before he could talk.
...I just don't know why.

BOB LEE
...And?

MEMPHIS
That's it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
Pork, I like you. You remind me of another kid not much younger than you.
(beat)
...he was a terrible liar as well.

Memphis looks at Swagger...in pain.

MEMPHIS
Your pal Sam Vincent was killed two nights ago -- hit and run --
...I'm sorry.

SWAGGER. He looks away, but we see the pain on his face. Terrible.

Swagger gets up and walks away, leaving Memphis looking at him, unable to help. Swagger walks to the end of the platform and stays there. Memphis just sits.

A WIDE VIEW OF THE STATION isolates them both.

-- Probably the quietest shot in the movie.

CLOSE ON SWAGGER, tears in his eyes. Then he turns and walks back to Memphis.

BOB LEE
Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL DESERTED AIRFIELD - DAWN

Headlights of a car make their way towards a hanger with TWO MEN standing in front of it, Pullman in a suit, the OTHER in combat fatigues. The car stops and Meg gets out and approaches them.

PULLMAN
I've got eighteen men and two choppers.

MEG
Good. Memphis crossed the Tennessee state line two days ago. He's moving faster than we thought. How soon can we be at Scott's?

PULLMAN
Two hours. A little more.

MEG
Let's do it.

Pullman and the other man pull open the hangar doors to reveal --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- TWO HUEY EX-MILITARY HELICOPTERS, surrounded by SEVENTEEN HEAVILY ARMED MEN in combat fatigues. The man with Pullman, BARKS ORDERS in what seems to be SERB/CROAT. The men snap to order and begin to roll the helicopters out of the hangar.

PULLMAN
(watching them)
You don't think this is overkill?

MEG
Good choice of words.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL TOWN TENNESSEE - DAWN

Streets are empty. Only one car...next to the only pay phone.

CLOSE ON PAY PHONE. Memphis has the phone in one hand, while writing with the other.

MEMPHIS
OK...got it. Morales, listen to me. Tell Hap to meet me at this location as soon as possible. Tell him to come heavy...and fast...if he wants Bob Lee Swagger.

Memphis hangs up and walks to the car.

INT. MEMPHIS' CAR - DAWN

Memphis gets in. Swagger is no longer in FBI clothes.

MEMPHIS
Scott has a stud ranch just across the state line in North Carolina. We can make it in about two hours.

Memphis starts the car. He drives off.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Morales told me the information came too easy. I think we're being set up.

BOB LEE
I wouldn't have it any other way.

MEMPHIS. CLOSE.

MEMPHIS
Two things you should know, Bobby Lee... One. My career is over. Aiding the most wanted man in America has probably ended my chances of promotion...
Two. I've told them where to find you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
That's ok, pork. This thing had to end sometime.

SWAGGER, strangely calm -- he smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

The two choppers fully laden with armed men travel fast and low across rugged mountains and streams.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS AIRPORT - DAWN

Hap Fencl, Morales, Howard Utey and A DOZEN MEN IN SUITS are hurrying up the stairway to a small private jet. THE PILOT is YELLING to Hap over the ENGINE NOISE.

PILOT
(loud)
We'll have you on the ground in Asheville in a little over one hour.

HAP
(louder)
Call the local Bureau Office in Charlotte. Tell them to meet us with another dozen men with full combat gear and four attack helicopters.

CUT TO:

EXT. LON SCOTT'S - MORNING

A BEAUTIFUL MORNING --

-- Almost religious --

Swagger and Memphis are outside the car looking at the entrance to Scott's ranch some distance away. Beyond the entrance, we see an expensive collection of ranch buildings adjacent to a stunning Antebellum mansion atop a low rise. Behind it, a steep wooded hill rises up. Thick woods surround the whole property.

BOB LEE SWAGGER opens the trunk and takes out the rifle given to him by Rate. Memphis is putting on a bulletproof vest and FBI identification. We see the directional mike case as well. Swagger looks through the scope at the house and surrounding buildings.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCOPE P.O.V. -- What he sees -- No signs of life.

BOB LEE
Like to thank you for everything.

MEMPHIS
Haven't done anything yet, just supplied a vehicle.

BOB LEE
And I want you to take the vehicle and drive away.

MEMPHIS
Can't miss the climax.

BOB LEE. He doesn't want the kid to die.

BOB LEE
(beat)
You may miss more than the climax.

MEMPHIS. He understands exactly what Swagger means.

MEMPHIS
Assume I know that.

Swagger puts the rifle back in it's case, closes the trunk, and reaches forward to yank Memphis' Glock automatic from it's holster. Memphis protests.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Hey!

BOB LEE
Sorry, pork...this is something I have to do...alone.

MEMPHIS -- his own gun pointed at him. Again.

MEMPHIS AND SWAGGER. Nothing to be said.

Memphis reluctantly gets into his car. Swagger steps to the driver's window.

BOB LEE (CONT'D)
Remember what I told you, Nick.

Memphis nods. Then Swagger is gone --

-- Memphis drives off --

SWAGGER, walks toward the gate tucking the Glock inside his jacket.

CUT TO:

INT. LON SCOTT'S HOUSE - MORNING

SCOPE P.O.V. -- Long lens with cross hairs.

We see Memphis drive away and Swagger walking up the long driveway.

CUT TO:

EXT. LON SCOTT'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

SWAGGER. Alone. Walking easy. His eyes fixed on --

THE HOUSE -- as it is seen from his P.O.V. --

Large. Expensive...dangerous.

INT. LON SCOTT'S HOUSE - DAY

SCOPE P.O.V. --

The cross hairs drift from Bob Lee's chest to his head. He looks directly at us now, then away --

Still he walks...

Still no shot.

EXT. LON SCOTT'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

The house is enormous now as we follow Swagger up onto the porch and over to the front door. Swagger looks up to see the security camera turning to point at him. He goes to knock when the doors suddenly open automatically accompanied by a VOICE from a loudspeaker.

SCOTT (O.S.)
Come in. Please. Just straight through. I'm on the terrace.

Swagger steps inside and surveys the room.

Huge. Lavish. Beautiful objects everywhere.

-- But more than that --

Horses.

Sculptures, paintings, photographs, and paraphernalia. A veritable history of the horse. Swagger passes a priceless stone sculpture of Alexander the Great astride his horse, Bucephalus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One thing Swagger notices --

-- no guns.

Or anything to do with them.

Swagger walks on to a huge set of open doors, leading to the outside. He draws Memphis' gun out.

EXT. A GIGANTIC STONE TERRACE - DAY

Overlooking the hills and trees. Tables and chair and umbrellas to shield the sun --

-- an incline that leads down to a perfect swimming pool.

And at the farthest end, in a wheelchair --

-- LON SCOTT.

-- with a rifle in his hands. Not just any rifle --

-- one of the Black Kings.

And now he comes rolling toward Swagger.

LON SCOTT
Bob Lee Swagger -- the Bob Lee Swagger --
-- a highlight for me, sir.

BOB LEE
You've been expecting me.

LON SCOTT
I have friends in high places, Mister Swagger. You had to come to me eventually.

BOB LEE
(points gun)
How do you know I won't shoot you.

LON SCOTT
For the same reason I didn't shoot you...we want to see each other. Face to face. Surely to come all this way, you must have questions for me.

BOB LEE
-- were you in New Orleans?

LON SCOTT
My God, man, I was in the clock tower.

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
You admit you did the shooting?

LON SCOTT
Yessir, and with pride -- and for twenty million dollars --

BOB LEE
They paid you -- even though you missed?

LON SCOTT IN CLOSE UP. Roaring --

LON SCOTT
I never miss, sir -- I never meant to kill our President -- the strong man from Ecuador was always the target.

BOB LEE
Why?

LON SCOTT
I have no idea. They don't tell me and I don't ask. I'm a professional.

BOB LEE
You're a murderer.

LON SCOTT
And how many men have you killed?

BOB LEE
I killed for my country. You kill for money.

LON SCOTT
Such a fine distinction, don't you think? Besides, look what your country has done for you.

SWAGGER. Nothing.

LON SCOTT (CONT'D)
Don't you want to know how it was done?

BOB LEE
I already know.

LON SCOTT
Beautiful when you think of it. They got me the round you fired into a plastic bucket. I re-barrelled the Black King to .318 and re-fired that round into the man from Ecuador.

BOB LEE
And who are they?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LON SCOTT
Why don't you ask them yourself. That sounds like them now.

SWAGGER. And now we hear the familiar CHOP of the rotor blades, as the two choppers approach the ranch.

Swagger lifts his gun to point at Scott. He backs away with a look of fear in his eyes.

And Scott is enjoying every moment of it.

Then Swagger runs -- or as much as he can with his old hip wound.

Swagger winces as he clutches the chest wound.

The NOISE of the CHOPPERS is deafening now as Swagger runs across the open ground separating the house from the stables and the hill beyond.

CUT TO:

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

We see Swagger running towards the stables from over the Pilot's shoulder. Pullman is yelling at the mercenaries. We can't hear him over the NOISE of the CHOPPER. The men leap out as we --

CUT TO:

EXT. LON SCOTT'S HOUSE - DAY

CHAOS, as two large HUEY'S start disgorging HEAVILY ARMED MEN.

-- HORSES run in panic --

SWAGGER crashes through the stable door.

PULLMAN is pointing to the stable door.

EIGHT MERCENARIES with Israeli Galil assault rifles charge the stables.

Their COMMANDER is issuing orders in SERB/CROAT through a voice activated headset radio.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANOTHER EIGHT MERCENARIES leap out of the second chopper and move forward to secure a large perimeter.

CUT TO:

MEG AND PULLMAN move over to join LON SCOTT.

CUT TO:

LON SCOTT. And you can see the excitement in his eyes --

CUT TO:

EXT. LON SCOTT'S STABLES - DAY

TWO FAST MOVING MERCENARIES moving to cut off any escape from the rear.

CUT TO:

TWO MORE on either side of the stables.

CUT TO:

FOUR MERCENARIES charge the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. LON SCOTT'S STABLES - DAY

Light pours into the stables as the four killers charge in --

-- Horses WHINNY and CRASH about in their stalls as the MERCENARIES glide through the interior --

But there is nothing.

-- MEG AND PULLMAN, watching --

-- THE COMMANDER, a hand signal --

ANOTHER FOUR MERCENARIES approach the front.

CUT TO:

TWO MERCENARIES, at the rear --

-- As SWAGGER kills them both.

DEAD. With two shots...between the eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their bodies are still falling as Swagger erupts from the rear of the stables and disappears into a thicket of fences and bushes leading up to the hill in the rear of the stables.

CUT TO:

GUNFIRE, erupting from the four killers inside as they rush to the rear. Horses SCREAM at the GUNFIRE.

A hundred rounds of AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE peppers the surrounding fences and bushes where Swagger was last seen --

-- To no effect. Swagger is gone.

LON SCOTT, SCREAMING to stop the indiscriminate GUNFIRE around his horses.

And it does.

An eerie silence settles over the compound as the guns fall silent. Only the SOUND of IDLING CHOPPERS is heard.

The MERCENARIES' COMMANDER rapidly deploys the remaining fourteen men into two man squads. He indicates for them to surround the hill and move upwards.

The MERCENARIES do so warily, because they look at their two dead companions --

-- shot between the eyes in the space between two seconds.

CUT TO:

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

MEG watches calmly as PULLMAN BARKS ORDERS to the MERCENARY COMMANDER by walkie-talkie. LON SCOTT is looking through the scope of his rifle at --

SCOPE P.O.V. -- Nothing. Swagger has vanished.

MEG
(bored)
Can we wrap this up, please.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

A PAIR OF MERCENARIES, moving up the hill cautiously. Each pair within sight of the other. A signal and they move upwards.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

SWAGGER, moving uphill with a natural ease. No sign of painful wounds hindering his progress now. His eyes are calm and his breathing is measured.

He is back in the world he knows best.

Swagger reaches the top of the hill underneath an overhang of rock and jumps into --

-- a prepared shooting position --

-- prepared by NICK MEMPHIS, who helps SWAGGER into position.

The Black King rifle is lying next to a large amount of ammunition. Swagger grins at Memphis and gives him his weapon.

BOB LEE
Pulls to the right a little, Nick. Get a Smith and Wesson. It'll never let you down.

MEMPHIS
Is everyone a comedian? I didn't think you were gonna make it up that hill, old man.

Swagger settles into a classic shooting position -- legs spread, rifle on a soft, but firm rest.

BOB LEE
They'll be coming from all sides. I need you to be my eyes, pork.

Memphis scrambles over beside Swagger.

SWAGGER AND MEMPHIS -- Together...again.

MEMPHIS
Two bad men, three o'clock. About 250 yards.

CUT TO:

SWAGGER, swings the Black King to the area.

CUT TO:

SCOPE P.O.V. -- TWO MERCENARIES, darting from rock to tree, trying to remain hidden. The cross hairs follow one man.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

THE LEAD MERCENARY is shot center-chest. He flies backwards. Dead before he hits the ground.

THE SECOND MAN turns to look at him -- and is shot through the head -- just as the other man's body crashes through some bushes. As the ECHO of the TWO SHOTS rolls around the hillside, we --

CUT TO:

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

The three of them. Listening to the TWO SHOTS.

MEG
What was that?

LON SCOTT
(in shock)
That was a rifle. Like mine. You've got to get those men out of there.

PULLMAN
Why?

LON SCOTT
(screams)
Don't you get it, you moron?! He's back on a hill. With a rifle -- you thought you had him trapped...

MEG
(impressed)
...and he's trapped us.

PULLMAN
But he's only one man!

MEG
I think we're outnumbered.

Pullman rushes off. Leaving Meg with Scott.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

SWAGGER, aiming --

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS, calling --

CUT TO:

SWAGGER, firing once...twice.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

ANOTHER MERCENARY is shot in the head. His brains are on his companion long enough for the shock to register --

-- and then as he stands and FIRES EVERY ROUND in his Galil in a futile effort -- his body goes flying sideways as if swiped with a deadly hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

We are now watching a well-oiled machine.

Sight. Fire. Reload. Site. Fire. Reload.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

THE COMMANDER urges his men onwards in an all out assault.

CUT TO:

WE SEE THE REMAINING MEN closing in from all sides --

-- About 150 yards from the hilltop, A MERCENARY stops momentarily to aim and is blown over backwards --

-- crashing into the man behind him -- a hole in his chest punched straight through his body armor --

CUT TO:

THE MERCENARY COMMANDER, SCREAMING into his microphone.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

SWAGGER sees the assault begin. He rolls over to shift position just as Memphis CALLS.

MEMPHIS
Four o'clock. Single. 100 yards. One o'clock. Two men. 100 yards and closing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SWAGGER. CLOSE. Calm -- in his bubble.

Just like the old days.

CLOSE ON FINGER, tightens --

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

A MERCENARY, open-mouthed, YELLING -- charging --

Perfect teeth -- until a shot tears straight through his mouth and exits splintering timber in a tree behind him --

-- One thing is becoming obvious to all on the hillside --

-- every time Swagger fires, a man dies --

EXT. LON SCOTT'S RANCH GROUNDS - DAY

PULLMAN indicates to the PILOT of one chopper to take off --

-- He jumps in and swings a .50 caliber machine gun around to face out the door --

CUT TO:

THE HELICOPTER ROARS into the sky.

CUT TO:

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

MEG AND LON SCOTT, watch as the chopper THUNDERS overhead and heads up the slope. Scott maneuvers his chair and rifle into a shooting position.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

SWAGGER shoots another man dead as the chopper rises into view between the trees.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

PULLMAN fires the .50 caliber at Swagger's position, as the chopper approaches side on --

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

LEAVES AND BRANCHES SPLINTER as the .50 caliber rounds chop through the foliage -- tearing a path up the hillside to Swagger's position.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

THE MERCENARY COMMANDER, indicates one final assault.

CUT TO:

THE LAST SIX MERCENARIES, charge from all directions.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

MEMPHIS, scrambles for cover as .50 caliber rounds scream around him.

CUT TO:

SWAGGER -- calmly aiming --

CUT TO:

SCOPE P.O.V. -- cross-hairs on the PILOT --

CUT TO:

SWAGGER -- fires --

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

THE PILOT is shot center chest straight through the Plexiglas bubble --

PULLMAN. CLOSE -- as the terror hits him. He SCREAMS.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

THE HUEY slips forward and plows into the treetops at full speed --

-- rotor blades shear off and fly --

-- branches and timber fly --

CONTINUED:

-- the machine bursts into a fireball that consumes everything in it's path as it tumbles uphill in a SHRIEKING WRENCHING SOUND.

-- ONE MERCENARY is consumed by fire --

-- ANOTHER is watching in stunned silence --

-- as the wreckage misses him by inches -- and then he is shot dead by Bob Lee Swagger.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

SCOPE P.O.V. -- SCOTT'S RIFLE. He sees the carnage up close.

LON SCOTT
Holy shit!

MEG sees the hopelessness of the situation and leaves.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

THE LAST FOUR MERCENARIES have reached the top and are spraying Swagger's position with GUNFIRE --

CUT TO:

SWAGGER -- calm, as bullets zing by --

-- he kills another man.

CUT TO:

MEMPHIS, sees TWO MERCENARIES attacking from behind Swagger -- He rolls over and empties the entire clip of his Glock at both of them --

ONE MERCENARY dies instantly, tumbling forward into their position -- THE OTHER spins around, taking several hits in his body armor, but still dangerous -- he steadies himself, as Memphis runs out of ammo, raises his weapon and --

-- is sent flying backwards by Swagger, who fires at point blank range.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

THE MERCENARY COMMANDER takes one look at the flaming wreckage and dead bodies around him and turns to run --

-- but you can't escape the wrath of God.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--- and Swagger shoots him on the run. Dead.

EXT. SCOTT'S RANCH GROUNDS - DAY

MEG is climbing into the remaining chopper. She indicates to the terrified PILOT to take off. But it's no use because --

-- a bullet tears through the bubble and hits him straight through his helmet --

CUT TO:

MEG -- now she realizes.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

SWAGGER lowers his rifle and looks over the edge. MEMPHIS stands up, looking at his Glock.

MEMPHIS
You're right. It pulls to the left...

SWAGGER turns.

BOB LEE
Get down, Donny.

MEMPHIS ducks -- as a bullet slams into the rock where his head was seconds ago --

CUT TO:

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

LON SCOTT -- sweating -- re-sighting his rifle --

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

SWAGGER -- CLOSE, aiming --

-- a long shot --

-- but not that long --

CUT TO:

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

LON SCOTT, sighting --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- and the wheel of his chair is shattered --

-- the chair careens over --

-- he is thrown to the ground, stunned.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

SWAGGER AND MEMPHIS -- walk down the hill past burning wreckage. Swagger carries the Black King. Memphis has the metallic microphone case.

MEMPHIS
Why did you call me Donny back there?

BOB LEE
Did I?

MEMPHIS
Yeah.

BOB LEE
Sorry. Wasn't thinking straight.

They walk on.

MEMPHIS
But you're o.k. now...right?

BOB LEE
Never better.

CUT TO:

INT. LON SCOTT'S GARAGE - DAY

MEG has hot-wired Scott's Range Rover. She ROARS forward out of the garage and into the driveway, only to brake suddenly because she sees --

-- a locked steel gate --

-- and SWAGGER is behind it, pointing a rifle at her.

SWAGGER. CLOSE. He shakes his head.

CUT TO:

MEG. CLOSE. It's over.

CUT TO:

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

LON SCOTT is struggling to pick himself up, but it's no use. He looks terrified as Swagger and Memphis arrive with Meg.

Swagger bends down to pick up Scott's rifle. He does not help Scott up. Instead, he bends down close to Scott's ear.

BOB LEE
I believe FBI Ballistics are gonna be mighty interested in the barrel of this rifle -- somethin' you might think about while you sit alone...in your cell... for the rest of your life...

LON SCOTT, terrified.

CUT TO:

MEG AND MEMPHIS. SWAGGER stands up and looks at her. CLOSE.

They haven't been this close since New Orleans.

MEG
Congratulations, Swagger. You surpassed even my expectations. Why didn't you shoot me too?

BOB LEE
I need you to prove my innocence.

MEG
(laughs)
Don't look to me for help. What happened here will only put you in the electric chair twice as fast.

MEMPHIS
You're forgetting about me.

MEG
Really. A disgruntled, disgraced agent who became unbalanced and joined forces with a man who tried to kill the President. I don't think so.

BOB LEE
Why?

MEG
All this? Don't you know? It's what it's always about -- **oil**. This weekend, the biggest oil strike since Alaska is going to be announced off the coast of Ecuador -- and guess what, the guy that got shot,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG (CONT'D)
he hated us. Guess again, the new guy loves us. -- Oil, Swagger. Remember Desert Storm? Vital interests. God, I love that phrase.

Suddenly, they hear the SOUND of INCOMING HELICOPTERS -- FOUR SLEEK COBRA GUNSHIPS, full of FEDERAL AGENTS -- ROAR over the heads of everyone on the terrace.

LOUDSPEAKERS warn everyone not to move. One gunship HOVERS near the group, guns aimed. The other three machines land in a nearby pasture.

CUT TO:

The place is alive with FBI SWAT TEAMS, who secure the area and approach Swagger, Memphis, and Meg, with guns pointed. They all put their hands over their heads as instructed.

HAP FENCL, HOWARD UTEY, and MORALES come up fast.

SWAGGER is handcuffed and surrounded. His rights are READ.

MEG AND MEMPHIS are confronted at gunpoint.

HAP
Talk fast, Nick.

MEMPHIS
The guy on the ground is the real shooter. I can prove that. The woman hired him and all the dead guys. I can't prove that... yet.

MEG
(to Hap)
We were called on a tip-off. Memphis was assisting Swagger escape. They killed my men in an ambush.

MEMPHIS -- God she's good.

HAP
You said you had proof, Nick.

MEMPHIS opens the directional microphone case. He pulls out the recorder and plugs it into Lon Scott's wheelchair. He turns on the recorder and flips a switch on the wheelchair.

Lon Scott's public address system BOOMS to life --

-- with his own voice --

LON SCOTT (P.A. V.O.)
'...my God, man, I was in the clock tower.'

MEG, stunned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOB LEE (P.A. V.O.)
'You admit you did the shooting?'

LON SCOTT (P.A. V.O.)
'Yessir, and with pride -- and for twenty million dollars'

LON SCOTT. CLOSE. horrified.

HOWARD UTEY, HAP FENCL. Astonished.

LON SCOTT (CONT'D)
' -- I never meant to kill our President -- the strong man from Ecuador was always the target.'

And that's it. Memphis turns off the recorder.

MEMPHIS
We've got his rifle. I know how they matched the bullet to Swagger's gun.

MEG, says nothing. Her mind racing. Hap, Utey and the others lower their weapons. Lon Scott is hauled up into his shattered wheelchair. He is READ his rights. Swagger is released from his handcuffs.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Hap Fencl, Bob Lee Swagger.

Hap and Swagger looks at each other. Swagger nods.

This is all too much for Hap.

Morales steps forward.

MORALES
Nick, you were right. Bedoya was killed because he knew about the hit. I've got Ecuadorean Intelligence Officers travelling up here to verify it.

Morales looks at Meg.

MORALES (CONT'D)
She's the one who told us how to find this place.

Meg is led away along with Lon Scott. CHOPPERS come and go. ONE is circling the burning wreckage of the crashed HUEY. Hap looks at Memphis.

HAP
Why were we ever friends?

CUT TO:

EXT. LON SCOTT'S TERRACE - DUSK

A transformation has come over Lon Scott's. There are DOZENS MORE PEOPLE scouring the grounds, taking photographs, etc...

CHOPPERS come and go -- In the distance beyond the gate, AN ARMY OF NEWSCREWS and a forest of microwave antennas can be seen.

Memphis comes onto the porch where Swagger is having his chest treated by a MEDICAL TEAM. Memphis watches as Swagger is re-bandaged.

MEMPHIS
Doctor, could I have a moment?

THE DOCTOR nods and leaves with a NURSE, leaving Swagger and Memphis alone. They see HAP FENCL, HOWARD UTEY, and a LOT OF OLDER MEN in suits and trench coats all gathered in a group.

BOB LEE
They're cleaning up.

MEMPHIS
Yup. The fix is in. See all those guys with Hap? CIA, NSA, Secret Service, State Department. Shall I go on?

BOB LEE
I get the picture.

MEMPHIS
By tomorrow morning, the official story will be something like this. A far right anti-government group led by Pullman and Dobbler hired Lon Scott and framed you...
...He's confessed, by the way.

BOB LEE
What about her?

MEMPHIS
It's hard to say. She screwed up badly. That means she either gets promoted or she disappears.

BOB LEE
Disappears?

MEMPHIS
You know how it is.

BOB LEE
It never changes. They were doing this thirty years ago in Vietnam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEMPHIS
I guess the government can't allow the reasons behind the assassination to become public knowledge -- no foreign country would ever trust us again.

SWAGGER. He sighs. Looks at Memphis.

BOB LEE
How can you put up with this?

MEMPHIS
I'm not. I've resigned. Think I'd make a good private eye?

SWAGGER AND MEMPHIS. Both LAUGH.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
They've got a chopper waiting to take you out of here.

MEMPHIS stands and extends his hand to Swagger.

MEMPHIS (CONT'D)
Sir. It's been a pleasure to make your acquaintance.

SWAGGER takes his hand. They shake.

BOB LEE
Likewise...you're a good man, Nick Memphis.

SWAGGER, picks up the Black King, then he and Memphis walk down off the porch.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A HELICOPTER waits on the front lawn.

Swagger and Memphis move to it.

MEMPHIS
You'll call me if you're ever back in New Orleans?

BOB LEE
I will <u>never</u> be back in New Orleans.
(beat)
But you'd be the reason if I came.

MEMPHIS
The Black King everything you imagined?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB LEE
Actually, it pulled a little right. I'll get it working once I'm home.

MEMPHIS
Lot of people are going to want to talk to you.

BOB LEE
I'm good at disappearing.
(beat)
They'll get bored trying to find me.

MEMPHIS
Then what?

CUT TO:

BOB LEE. He thinks a minute. Then --

BOB LEE
First thing? Got to get me a new dog.

And now he does something we haven't seen him do much --

-- SWAGGER smiles...

Then he gets in the chopper.

The chopper rises into the air.

HOLD ON SWAGGER.

The sky has him...

FINAL FADE OUT.